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EUGENE ARAM.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
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EUGENE ARAM.

A TALE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "PELHAM," "DEVEREUX," &c.

" Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal Shadows are that walk by us still.
* * * * *
* * * All things that are
Made for our general uses, are at war,—
Ev'n we among ourselves!"

JOHN FLETCHER,
Upon "An Honest Man's Fortune."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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1832.



EUGENE ARAM.

BOOK II.

CONTINUED.

VOL. II.

B

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER VII.

WALTER VISITS ANOTHER OF HIS UNCLE'S FRIENDS.—MR. COURTLAND'S STRANGE COMPLAINT.—WALTER LEARNS NEWS OF HIS FATHER, WHICH SURPRISES HIM.—THE CHANGE IN HIS DESTINATION.

“God’s my life, did you ever hear the like, what a strange man is this !

“What you have possessed me withall, I’ll discharge it amply.”

BEN JONSON’s *Every Man in his Humour*.

MR. COURTLAND’S house was surrounded by a high wall, and stood at the outskirts of the town. A little wooden door buried deep within the wall, seemed the only entrance. At this Walter paused, and after twice applying to the

bell, a footman of a peculiarly grave and sanctimonious appearance, opened the door.

In reply to Walter's inquiries, he informed him that Mr. Courtland was very unwell, and never saw "Company."—Walter, however, producing from his pocket-book the introductory letter given him by his father, slipped it into the servant's hand, accompanied by half a crown, and begged to be announced as a gentleman on very particular business.

"Well, Sir, you can step in," said the servant, giving way; "but my master is very poorly, very poorly indeed."

"Indeed, I am sorry to hear it: has he been long so?"

"Going on for ten——years, sir!" replied the servant, with great gravity; and opening the door of the house which stood within a few paces of the wall, on a singularly flat and bare grass-plot, he showed him into a room, and left him alone.

The first thing that struck Walter in this

apartment, was its remarkable *lightness*. Though not large, it had no less than seven windows. Two sides of the wall, seemed indeed all window ! Nor were these admittants of the celestial beam-shaded by any blind or curtain .

“ The gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day”

made itself thoroughly at home in this airy chamber. Nevertheless, though so light, it seemed to Walter any thing but cheerful. The sun had blistered and discoloured the painting of the wainscot, originally of a pale sea-green ; there was little furniture in the apartment : one table in the centre, some half a dozen chairs, and a very small Turkey-carpet, which did not cover one tenth part of the clean, cold, smooth, oak boards, constituted all the goods and chattels visible in the room. But what particularly added effect to the bareness of all within, was the singular and laborious bareness of all without. From each of these seven windows, nothing but a forlorn green flat of some extent was to be seen ; there was not

a tree, or a shrub, or a flower in the whole expanse, although by several stumps of trees near the house, Walter perceived that the place had not always been so destitute of vegetable life.

While he was yet looking upon this singular baldness of scene, the servant re-entered with his master's compliments, and a message that he should be happy to see any relation of Mr. Lester.

Walter accordingly followed the footman into an apartment possessing exactly the same peculiarities as the former one; viz. a most disproportionate plurality of windows, a commodious scantiness of furniture, and a prospect without, that seemed as if the house had been built on the middle of Salisbury plain.

Mr. Courtland, himself a stout man, and still preserving the rosy hues and comely features, though certainly not the same hilarious expression, which Lester had attributed to him, sat in a large chair, close by the centre window, which

was open. He rose and shook Walter by the hand with great cordiality.

“ Sir, I am delighted to see you ! How is your worthy uncle ? I only wish he were with you— you dine with me of course. Thomas, tell the cook to add a tongue and chicken to the roast beef— no,—young gentleman, I will have no excuse ; sit down, sit down ; pray come near the window ; do you not find it dreadfully close ? not a breath of air ? This house is so choked up ; don’t you find it so, eh ? Ah, I see, you can scarcely gasp.”

“ My dear Sir, you are mistaken ; I am rather cold, on the contrary : nor did I ever in my life see a more airy house than yours.”

“ I try to make it so, Sir, but I can’t succeed ; if you had seen what it was, when I first bought it ! a garden here, Sir ; a copse there ; a wilderness, God wot ! at the back : and a row of chesnut trees in the front ! You may conceive the consequence, Sir ; I had not been long here, not two

years, before my health was gone, Sir, gone—the d—d vegetable life sucked it out of me. The trees kept away all the air—I was nearly suffocated, without, at first, guessing the cause. But at length, though not till I had been withering away for five years, I discovered the origin of my malady. I went to work, Sir; I plucked up the cursed garden, I cut down the infernal chesnuts, I made a bowling green of the diabolical wilderness, but I fear it is too late. I am dying by inches,—have been dying ever since. The malaria has effectually tainted my constitution."

Here Mr. Courtland heaved a deep sigh, and shook his head with a most gloomy expression of countenance.

"Indeed, Sir," said Walter, "I should not, to look at you, imagine that you suffered under any complaint. You seem still the same picture of health, that my uncle describes you to have been when you knew him so many years ago."

"Yes, Sir, yes; the confounded malaria fixed

the colour to my cheeks ; the blood is stagnant, Sir. Would to God I could see myself a shade paler !—the blood does not flow ; I am like a pool in a citizen's garden, with a willow at each corner ;—but a truce to my complaints. You see, Sir, I am no hypochondriac, as my fool of a doctor wants to persuade me : a hypochondriac shudders at every breath of air, trembles when a door is open, and looks upon a window as the entrance of death. But I, Sir, never can have enough air ; thorough draught or east wind, it is all the same to me, so that I do but breathe. Is that like hypochondria ?—pshaw ! But tell me, young gentleman, about your uncle ; is he quite well,—stout,—hearty,—does he breathe easily,—no oppression ?”

“Sir, he enjoys exceedingly good health : he did please himself with the hope that I should give him good tidings of yourself, and another of his old friends whom I accidentally saw yesterday,—Sir Peter Hales.”

“Hales, Peter Hales !—ah ! a clever little fel-

low that : how delighted Lester's good heart will be to hear that little Peter is so improved ;—no longer a dissolute, harum-scarum fellow, throwing away his money, and always in debt. No, no ; a respectable steady character, an excellent manager, an active member of Parliament, domestic in private life,—Oh ! a very worthy man, Sir, a very worthy man!"

" He seems altered indeed, Sir," said Walter, who was young enough in the world to be surprised at this eulogy ; " but is still agreeable and fond of anecdote. He told me of his race with you for a thousand guineas."

" Ah, don't talk of those days," said Mr. Court-and, shaking his head pensively, " it makes me melancholy. Yes, Peter ought to recollect that, for he has never paid me to this day ; affected to treat it as a jest, and swore he could have beat me if he would. But indeed it was my fault, Sir ; Peter had not then a thousand farthings in the world, and when he grew rich, he became a steady character, and I did not like to remind him

of our former follies. Aha! can I offer you a pinch of snuff?—You look feverish, Sir; surely this room must affect you, though you are too polite to say so. Pray open that door, and then this window, and put your chair right between the two. You have no notion how refreshing the draught is."

Walter politely declined the proffered ague, and thinking he had now made sufficient progress in the acquaintance of this singular non-hypochondriac to introduce the subject he had most at heart, hastened to speak of his father.

"I have chanced, Sir," said he, "very unexpectedly upon something that once belonged to my poor father;" here he showed the whip. "I find from the saddler of whom I bought it, that the owner was at your house some twelve or fourteen years ago. I do not know whether you are aware that our family have heard nothing respecting my father's fate for a considerably longer time than that which has elapsed since you appear to have seen him, if at least I may

hope that he was your guest, and the owner of this whip; and any news you can give me of him, any clue by which he can possibly be traced, would be to us all—to me in particular—an inestimable obligation."

"Your father!" said Mr. Courtland. "Oh,—ay, your uncle's brother. What was his Christian name?—Henry?"

"Geoffrey."

"Ay, exactly; Geoffrey! What, not been heard of?—his family not know where he is? A sad thing, Sir; but he was always a wild fellow; now here, now there, like a flash of lightning. But it is true, it is true, he did stay a day here, several years ago, when I first bought the place. I can tell you all about it;—but you seem agitated,—do come nearer the window:—there, that's right. Well, Sir, it is, as I said, a great many years ago,—perhaps fourteen,—and I was speaking to the landlord of the Greyhound about some hay he wished to sell, when a gentleman rode into the yard full tear, as your father

always did ride, and in getting out of his way I recognised Geoffrey Lester. I did not know him well—far from it; but I had seen him once or twice with your uncle, and though he was a strange pickle, he sang a good song, and was deuced amusing. Well, Sir, I accosted him, and, for the sake of your uncle, I asked him to dine with me, and take a bed at my new house. Ah! I little thought what a dear bargain it was to be. He accepted my invitation, for I fancy—no offence, Sir,—there were few invitations that Mr. Geoffrey Lester ever refused to accept. We dined *tête-à-tête*,—I am an old bachelor, Sir,—and very entertaining he was, though his sentiments seemed to me broader than ever. He was capital, however, about the tricks he had played his creditors,—such manœuvres,—such escapes! After dinner he asked me if I ever corresponded with his brother. I told him no; that we were very good friends, but never heard from each other; and he then said, ‘Well, I shall surprise him with a visit shortly; but in case you *should* unexpectedly

have any communication with him, don't mention having seen me ; for, to tell you the truth, I am just returned from India, where I should have scraped up a little money, but that I spent it as fast as I got it. However, you know that I was always proverbially the luckiest fellow in the world—(and so, Sir, your father was !)—and while I was in India, I saved an old Colonel's life at a tiger-hunt ; he went home shortly afterwards, and settled in Yorkshire ; and the other day on my return to England, to which my ill-health drove me, I learned that my old Colonel was really dead, and had left me a handsome legacy, with his house in Yorkshire. I am now going down to Yorkshire to convert the chattels into gold—to receive my money, and I shall then seek out my good brother, my household gods, and, perhaps, though it 's not likely, settle into a sober fellow for the rest of my life.' I don't tell you, young gentleman, that those were your father's exact words,—one can't remember verbatim so many years ago ;—but it was

to that effect. He left me the next day, and I never heard any thing more of him: to say the truth, he was looking wonderfully yellow, and fearfully reduced. And I fancied at the time, he could not live long; he was prematurely old, and decrepit in body, though gay in spirit; so that I had tacitly imagined in never hearing of him more—that he had departed life. But, good Heavens! did you never hear of this legacy?"

"Never: not a word!" said Walter, who had listened to these particulars in great surprise. "And to what part of Yorkshire did he say he was going?"

"That he did not mention."

"Nor the Colonel's name?"

"Not as I remember; he might, but I think not. But I am certain that the county was Yorkshire, and the gentleman, whatever was his name, was a Colonel. Stay! I recollect one more particular, which it is lucky I do remember. Your father in giving me, as I said before, in his own humorous strain, the history of his adventures,

his hair-breadth escapes from his duns, the various disguises, and the numerous *aliases* he had assumed, mentioned that the name he had borne in India, and by which, he assured me, he had made quite a good character—was Clarke : he also said, by the way, that he still kept to that name, and was very merry on the advantages of having so common an one. ‘By which,’ he said wittily, ‘he could father all his own sins on some other Mr. Clarke, at the same time that he could seize and appropriate all the *merits* of all his other namesakes.’ Ah, no offence ; but he was a sad dog, that father of yours ! So you see that, in all probability, if he ever reached Yorkshire, it was under the name of Clarke that he claimed and received his legacy.”

“ You have told me more,” said Walter joyfully, “ than we have heard since his disappearance, and I shall turn my horses’ heads northward to-morrow, by break of day. But you say, ‘if he ever reached Yorkshire,—What should prevent him?’ ”

“ His health !” said the non-hypochondriac,

" I should not be greatly surprised if—if—In short you had better look at the grave-stones by the way, for the name of Clarke."

" Perhaps you can give me the dates, Sir," said Walter, somewhat cast down from his elation.

" Ay ! I 'll see, I 'll see, after dinner ; the commonness of the name has its disadvantages now. Poor Geoffrey !—I dare say there are fifty tombs, to the memory of fifty Clarkes, between this and York. But come, Sir, there 's the dinner-bell."

Whatever might have been the maladies entailed upon the portly frame of Mr. Courtland by the vegetable life of the departed trees, a want of appetite was not among the number. Whenever a man is not abstinent from rule, or from early habit, as in the case of Aram, Solitude makes its votaries particularly fond of their dinner. They have no other event wherewith to mark their day—they think over it, they anticipate it, they nourish its soft idea with their imagination ; if they do look forward to any thing else more than dinner, it is—supper !

Mr. Courtland deliberately pinned the napkin

to his waistcoat, ordered all the windows to be thrown open, and set to work like the good Canon in Gil Blas. He still retained enough of his former self, to preserve an excellent cook ; so far at least as the excellence of a she-artist goes ; and though most of his viands were of the plainest, who does not know what skill it requires to produce an unexceptionable roast, or a blameless boil ? Talk of good professed cooks, indeed ! they are plentiful as blackberries : it is the good, plain cook, who is the rarity !

Half a tureen of strong soup ; three pounds, at least, of stewed carp ; all the *under part* of a sirloin of beef ; three quarters of a tongue ; the moiety of a chicken ; six pancakes and a tartlet, having severally disappeared down the jaws of the invalid,

“ *Et cuncta terrarum subacta
Præter atrocem animum Catonis,* ”

he still called for two deviled biscuits and an anchovy !

When these were gone, he had the wine set on

a little table by the window, and declared that the air seemed closer than ever. Walter was no longer surprised at the singular nature of the non-hypochondriac's complaint.

Walter declined the bed that Mr. Courtland offered him—though his host kindly assured him that it had no curtains, and that there was not a shutter to the house—upon the plea of starting the next morning at daybreak, and his consequent unwillingness to disturb the regular establishment of the invalid: and Courtland, who was still an excellent, hospitable, friendly man, suffered his friend's nephew to depart with regret. He supplied him, however, by a reference to an old note-book, with the date of the year, and even month, in which he had been favoured by a visit from Mr. Clarke, who, it seemed, had also changed his Christian name from Geoffrey, to one beginning with D——; but whether it was David or Daniel the host remembered not. In parting with Walter, Courtland shook his head, and observed :—

“ *Entre nous*, Sir, I fear this may be a wild-goose chase. Your father was too facetious to confine himself to fact—excuse me, Sir—and perhaps the Colonel and the legacy were merely inventions—*pour passer le temps*—there was only one reason indeed, that made me fully believe the story.”

“ What was that, Sir ?” asked Walter, blushing deeply, at the universality of that estimation his father had obtained.

“ Excuse me, my young friend.”

“ Nay, Sir, let me press you.”

“ Why, then, Mr. Geoffrey Lester did not ask me to lend him any money.”

The next morning, instead of repairing to the gaieties of the metropolis, Walter had, upon this slight and dubious clue, altered his journey northward, and with an unquiet yet sanguine spirit, the adventurous son commenced his search after the fate of a father evidently so unworthy of the anxiety he had excited.

CHAPTER VIII.

WALTER'S MEDITATIONS.—THE CORPORAL'S GRIEF AND ANGER.—THE CORPORAL PERSONALLY DESCRIBED.—AN EXPLANATION WITH HIS MASTER.—THE CORPORAL OPENS HIMSELF TO THE YOUNG TRAVELLER.—HIS OPINIONS ON LOVE ;—ON THE WORLD ;—ON THE PLEASURE AND RESPECTABILITY OF CHEATING ;—ON LADIES—AND A PARTICULAR CLASS OF LADIES ;—ON AUTHORS ;—ON THE VALUE OF WORDS ;—ON FIGHTING ;—WITH SUNDY OTHER MATTERS OF EQUAL DELECTATION AND IMPROVEMENT.—AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.

“ Quale per incertam Lunam sub luce malignâ
Est iter.”

VIRGIL.

THE road prescribed to our travellers by the change in their destination led them back over a considerable portion of the ground they had already traversed, and since the Corporal took care that they should remain some hours in the place where they dined, night fell upon them as

they found themselves in the midst of the same long and dreary stage in which they had encountered Sir Peter Hales and the two suspected highwaymen.

Walter's mind was full of the project on which he was bent. The reader can fully comprehend how vivid must have been his emotions at thus chancing on what might prove a clue to the mystery that hung over his father's fate ; and sanguinely did he now indulge those intense meditations with which the imaginative minds of the young always brood over every more favourite idea, until they exalt the hope into a passion. Every thing connected with this strange and roving parent, had possessed for the breast of his son, not only an anxious, but so to speak, indulgent interest. The judgment of a young man is always inclined to sympathize with the wilder and more enterprising order of spirits ; and Walter had been at no loss for secret excuses wherewith to defend the irregular life and reckless habits of his parent. Amidst all his father's evident and

utter want of principle, Walter clung with a natural and self-deceptive partiality to the few traits of courage or generosity which relieved, if they did not redeem, his character ; traits which, with a character of that stamp, are so often, though always so unprofitably blended, and which generally cease with the commencement of age. He now felt elated by the conviction, as he had always been inspired by the hope, that it was to be his lot to discover one whom he still believed living, and whom he trusted to find amended. The same intimate persuasion of the "good luck" of Geoffrey Lester, which all who had known him appeared to entertain, was felt even in a more credulous and earnest degree by his son. Walter gave way now, indeed, to a variety of conjectures as to the motives which could have induced his father to persist in the concealment of his fate after his return to England ; but such of those conjectures as, if the more rational, were also the more despondent, he speedily and resolutely dismissed. Sometimes he thought that his father, on learning

the death of the wife he had abandoned, might have been possessed with a remorse which rendered him unwilling to disclose himself to the rest of his family, and a feeling that the main tie of home was broken ; sometimes he thought that the wanderer had been disappointed in his expected legacy, and dreading the attacks of his creditors, or unwilling to throw himself once more on the generosity of his brother, had again suddenly quitted England and entered on some enterprise or occupation abroad. It was also possible, to one so reckless and changeful, that even, after receiving the legacy, a proposition from some wild comrade might have hurried him away on any continental project on the mere impulse of the moment, for the impulse of the moment had always been the guide of his life ; and once abroad he might have returned to India, and in new connections forgotten the old ties at home. Letters from abroad too, miscarry ; and it was not improbable that the wanderer might have written repeatedly, and receiving no answer to his com-

munications, imagined that the dissoluteness of his life had deprived him of the affections of his family, and, deserving so well to have the proffer of renewed intercourse rejected, believed that it actually was so. These, and a hundred similar conjectures, found favour in the eyes of the young traveller; but the chances of a fatal accident, or sudden death, he pertinaciously refused at present to include in the number of probabilities. Had his father been seized with a mortal illness on the road, was it not likely that he would, in the remorse occasioned in the hardiest by approaching death, have written to his brother, and recommending his child to his care, have apprised him of the addition to his fortune? Walter then did not meditate embarrassing his present journey by those researches among the dead, which the worthy Courtland had so considerately recommended to his prudence: should his expedition, contrary to his hopes, prove wholly unsuccessful, it might then be well to retrace his steps and adopt the suggestion. But what man, at the age

of twenty-one, ever took much precaution on the darker side of a question on which his heart was interested ?

With what pleasure, escaping from conjecture to a more ultimate conclusion—did he, in recalling those words, in which his father had more than hinted to Courtland of his future amendment, contemplate recovering a parent made wise by years and sober by misfortunes, and restoring him to a hearth of tranquil virtues and peaceful enjoyments ! He imaged to himself a scene of that domestic happiness, which is so perfect in our dreams, because in our dreams monotony is always excluded from the picture. And, in this creation of Fancy, the form of Ellinor—his bright-eyed and gentle cousin, was not the least conspicuous. Since his altercation with Madeline, the love he had once thought so ineffaceable, had faded into a dim and sullen hue ; and, in proportion as the image of Madeline grew indistinct, that of her sister became more brilliant. Often, now, as he rode slowly onward, in the quiet of the deepening night, and the mellow stars softening

all on which they shone, he pressed the little token of Ellinor's affection to his heart, and wondered that it was only within the last few days he had discovered that her eyes were more beautiful than Madeline's, and her smile more touching. Meanwhile the redoubted Corporal, who was by no means pleased with the change in his master's plans, lingered behind, whistling the most melancholy tune in his collection. No young lady, anticipative of balls or coronets, had ever felt more complacent satisfaction in a journey to London than that which had cheered the athletic breast of the veteran on finding himself, at last, within one day's gentle march of the metropolis. And no young lady, suddenly summoned back in the first flush of her *debut*, by an unseasonable fit of gout or economy in papa, ever felt more irreparably aggrieved than now did the dejected Corporal. His master had not yet even acquainted him with the cause of the countermarch; and, in his own heart, he believed it nothing but the wanton levity and unpardonable fickleness "com-

mon to all them ere boys afore they have seen the world." He certainly considered himself a singularly ill-used and injured man, and drawing himself up to his full height, as if it were a matter with which Heaven should be acquainted at the earliest possible opportunity, he indulged, as we before said, in the melancholy consolation of a whistled death-dirge, occasionally interrupted by a long-drawn interlude half sigh, half snuffle of his favourite *augh—baugh*.

And here, we remember, that we have not as yet given to our reader a fitting portrait of the Corporal on horseback. Perhaps no better opportunity than the present may occur; and perhaps, also, Corporal Bunting, as well as Melrose Abbey, may seem a yet more interesting picture when viewed by the pale moonlight.

The Corporal then wore on his head a small cocked hat, which had formerly belonged to the Colonel of the Forty-second—the prints of my uncle Toby may serve to suggest its shape;—it had once boasted a feather—that was gone; but the

gold lace, though tarnished, and the cockade, though battered, still remained. From under this shade the profile of the Corporal assumed a particular aspect of heroism : though a good-looking man on the main, it was his air, height, and complexion, which made him so ; and a side view, unlike Lucian's one-eyed prince, was not the most favourable point in which his features could be regarded. His eyes, which were small and shrewd, were half hid by a pair of thick shaggy brows, which, while he whistled, he moved to and fro, as a horse moves his ears when he gives warning that he intends to shy ; his nose was straight—so far so good—but then it did not go far enough ; for though it seemed no despicable proboscis in front, somehow or another it appeared exceedingly short in profile ; to make up for this, the upper lip was of a length the more striking from being exceedingly straight ;—it had learned to hold itself upright, and make the most of its length as well as its master ! his under lip, alone protruded in the act of whistling, served yet

more markedly to throw the nose into the back-ground ; and, as for the chin—talk of the upper lip being long indeed!—the chin would have made two of it ; such a chin ! so long, so broad, so massive, had it been put on a dish might have passed, without discredit, for a round of beef ! it looked yet larger than it was from the exceeding tightness of the stiff black-leather stock below, which forced forth all the flesh it encountered into another chin, —a remove to the round. The hat, being somewhat too small for the Corporal, and being cocked knowingly in front, left the hinder half of the head exposed. And the hair, carried into a club according to the fashion, lay thick, and of a grizzled black, on the brawny shoulders below. The veteran was dressed in a blue coat, originally a frock ; but the skirts, having once, to the imminent peril of the place they guarded, caught fire, as the Corporal stood basking himself at Peter Dealtry's, had been so far amputated, as to leave only the stump of a tail, which just covered, and no more, that part which neither Art in bipeds nor

Nature in quadrupeds loves to leave wholly exposed. And that part, ah, how ample ! had Liston seen it, he would have hid for ever his diminished—opposite to *head*!—No wonder the Corporal had been so annoyed by the parcel of the previous day, a coat so short, and a — ; but no matter, pass we to the rest ! It was not only in its skirts that this wicked coat was deficient; the Corporal, who had within the last few years thriven lustily in the inactive serenity of Grassdale, had outgrown it prodigiously across the chest and girth ; nevertheless he managed to button it up. And thus the muscular proportions of the wearer bursting forth in all quarters, gave him the ludicrous appearance of a gigantic schoolboy. His wrists, and large sinewy hands, both employed at the bridle of his hard-mouthed charger, were markedly visible ; for it was the Corporal's custom whenever he came into an obscure part of the road, carefully to take off, and prudently to pocket, a pair of scrupulously clean white leather gloves which smartened up his appearance prodigiously in pass-

ing through the towns in their route. His breeches were of yellow buckskin, and ineffably tight ; his stockings were of grey worsted, and a pair of laced boots, that reached the ascent of a very mountainous calf, but declined any farther progress, completed his attire.

Fancy then this figure, seated with laborious and unswerving perpendicularity on a demi-pique saddle, ornamented with a huge pair of well-stuffed saddle-bags, and holsters revealing the stocks of a brace of immense pistols, the horse with its obstinate mouth thrust out, and the bridle drawn as tight as a bowstring ! its ears laid sullenly down, as if, like the Corporal, it complained of going to Yorkshire, and its long thick tail, not set up in a comely and well-educated arch, but hanging sheepishly down, as if resolved that its buttocks should at least be better covered than its master's !

And now, reader, it is not our fault if you cannot form some conception of the physical perfections of the Corporal and his steed.

The reverie of the contemplative Bunting was

interrupted by the voice of his master calling upon him to approach.

" Well, well !" muttered he, " the younker can't expect one as close at his heels as if we were trotting into Lunnon, which we might be at this time, sure enough, if he had not been so damned flighty,—augh !"

" Bunting, I say, do you hear ?"

" Yes, your honour, yes ; this ere horse is so 'nation sluggish."

" Sluggish ! why I thought he was too much the reverse, Bunting ? I thought he was one rather requiring the bridle than the spur."

" Augh ! your honour, he's slow when he should not, and fast when he should not ; changes his mind from pure whim, or pure spite ; new to the world, your honour, that's all ; a different thing if properly broke. There be a many like him !"

" You mean to be personal, Mr. Bunting," said Walter, laughing at the evident ill-humour of his attendant.

" Augh ! indeed and no !—I daren't—a poor

man like me—go for to presume to be parsonal,—unless I get hold of a poorer!"

"Why, Bunting, you do not mean to say that you would be so ungenerous as to affront a man because he was poorer than you?—fie!"

"Whaugh, your honour! and is not that the very reason why I'd affront him? surely it is not my betters I should affront; that would be ill bred, your honour,—quite want of discipline."

"But we owe it to our great Commander," said Walter, "to love all men."

"Augh! Sir, that's very good maxim,—none better—but shows ignorance of the world, Sir—great!"

"Bunting, your way of thinking is quite disgraceful. Do you know, Sir, that it is the Bible you were speaking of?"

"Augh, Sir! but the Bible was addressed to them Jew creturs! Howsomever, it's an excellent book for the poor; keeps 'em in order, favours discipline,—none more so."

"Hold your tongue. I called you, Bunting, because I think I heard you say you had once been at York. Do you know what towns we shall pass on our road thither?"

"Not I, your honour; it's a mighty long way.—What would the Squire think?—just at Lunnon, too. Could have learnt the whole road, Sir, inns all, if you had but gone on to Lunnon first. Howsoever, young gentlemen will be hasty,—no confidence in those older, and who are experienced in the world. I knows what I knows," and the Corporal recommenced his whistle.

"Why, Bunting, you seem quite discontented at my change of journey. Are you tired of riding, or were you very eager to get to town?"

"Augh! Sir; I was only thinking of what best for your honour,—I!—'tis not for me to like or dislike. Howsoever, the horses, poor creturs, must want rest for some days. Them dumb animals can't go on for ever, bumpety, bumpety, as your honour and I do.—Whaugh!"

"It is very true, Bunting, and I have had some thoughts of sending you home again with the horses, and travelling post."

"Eh!" grunted the Corporal, opening his eyes; "hopes your honour ben't serious."

"Why if *you* continue to look so serious, I must be serious too ; you understand, Bunting?"

"Augh—and that's all, your honour," cried the Corporal, brightening up, "shall look merry enough to-morrow, when one's in, as it were, like, to the change of road. But you see, Sir, it took me by surprise. Said I to myself, says I, it is an odd thing for you, Jacob Bunting, on the faith of a man, it is ! to go tramp here, tramp there, without knowing why or wherefore, as if you was still a private in the Forty-second, 'stead of a retired Corporal. You see, your honour, my pride was a hurt ; but it's all over now ;—only spites those beneath me,—I knows the world at my time o' life."

"Well, Bunting, when you learn the reason of my change of plan, you'll be perfectly satisfied

that I do quite right. In a word, you know that my father has been long missing ; I have found a clue by which I yet hope to trace him. This is the reason of my journey to Yorkshire."

"Augh!" said the Corporal, "and a very good reason : you 're a most excellent son, Sir ;—and Lunnon so nigh !"

"The thought of London seems to have bewitched you ; did you expect to find the streets of gold since you were there last ?"

"A—well Sir ; I hears they *be* greatly improved."

"Pshaw ! you talk of knowing the world, Bunting, and yet you pant to enter it with all the inexperience of a boy. Why even I could set you an example."

"'Tis 'cause I knows the world," said the Corporal, exceedingly nettled, "that I wants to get back to it. I have heard of some spoonies as never kist a girl, but never heard of any one who had kist a girl once, that did not long to be at it again."

“And I suppose, Mr. Profligate, it is that longing which makes you so hot for London?”

“There have been worse longings nor that,” quoth the Corporal gravely.

“Perhaps you meditate marrying one of the London belles; an heiress—eh?”

“Can’t but say,” said the Corporal very solemnly, “but that might be ‘ticed to marry a fortin, if so be she was young, pretty, good-tempered, and fell desperately in love with *me*,—best quality of all.”

“You’re a modest fellow.”

“Why, the longer a man lives, the more knows his value; would not sell myself a bargain now, whatever might at twenty-one!”

“At that rate you would be beyond all price at seventy,” said Walter: “but now tell me, Bunting, were you ever in love,—really and honestly in love?”

“Indeed, your honour,” said the Corporal, “I have been over head and ears; but that was afore I learnt to swim. Love’s very like bathing. At

first we go souse to the bottom, but if we're not drowned, then we gather pluck, grow calm, strike out gently, and make a deal pleasanter thing of it afore we've done. I'll tell you, Sir, what I thinks of love : 'twixt you and me, Sir, 'tis not that great thing in life, boys and girls want to make it out to be ; if 'twere one's dinner, that would be summut, for one can't do without that ; but lauk, Sir, Love's all in the fancy. One does not eat it, nor drink it ; and as for the rest,—why it's bother !"

"Bunting, you're a beast," said Walter in a rage, for though the Corporal had come off with a slight rebuke for his sneer at religion, we grieve to say that an attack on the sacredness of love seemed a crime beyond all toleration to the theologian of twenty-one.

The Corporal bowed, and thrust his tongue in his cheek.

There was a pause of some moments.

"And what," said Walter, for his spirits were raised, and he liked recurring to the quaint shrewd-

ness of the Corporal, “and what, after all, is the great charm of the world, that you so much wish to return to it?”

“Augh!” replied the Corporal, “’tis a pleasant thing to look about un with all one’s eyes open; rogue here, rogue there—keeps one alive;—life in Lunnon, life in a village—all the difference ’twixt healthy walk, and a doze in arm-chair; by the faith of a man, ’tis !”

“What! it is pleasant to have rascals about one?”

“Surely yes,” returned the Corporal drily; “what so delightful like as to feel one’s cliverness and ‘bility all set an end—bristling up like a porkypine; nothing makes a man tread so light, feel so proud, breathe so briskly, as the knowledge that he’s all his wits about him, that he’s a match for any one, that the Devil himself could not take him in. Augh! that’s what *I* calls the use of an immortal soul—bother !”

Walter laughed.

“And to feel one is likely to be cheated is the pleasantest way of passing one’s time in town, Bunting, eh?”

"Augh! and in cheating too!" answered the Corporal; "'cause you sees, Sir, there be two ways o' living; one to cheat,—one to be cheated. 'Tis pleasant enough to be cheated for a little while, as the younkers are, and as you'll be, your honour; but that's a pleasure don't last long—t'other lasts all your life; dare say your honour's often heard rich gentlemen say to their sons, 'you ought, for your own happiness' sake, like, my lad, to have summut to do—ought to have some profession, be you niver so rich,'—very true, your honour, and what does that mean? why it means that 'stead of being idle and cheated, the boy ought to be busy and cheat—augh!"

"Must a man who follows a profession, necessarily cheat, then?"

"Baugh! can your honour ask that? Does not the Lawyer cheat? and the Doctor cheat? and the Parson cheat, more than any? and that's the reason they all takes so much int'rest in their profession—bother!"

"But the soldier? you say nothing of him."

"Why, the soldier," said the Corporal, with

dignity, “ the *private* soldier, poor fellow, is only cheated ; but when he comes for to get for to be as high as a corp’ral, or a sargent, he comes for to get to bully others, and to cheat. Augh! then ’tis not for the privates to cheat,—that would be ‘sumpton indeed, save us!’”

“ The General, then, cheats more than any, I suppose ?”

“ Course, your honour ; he talks to the world ‘bout honour an’ glory, and love of his Country, and sich like—augh ! that’s proper cheating !”

“ You’re a bitter fellow, Mr. Bunting : and pray, what do you think of the Ladies—‘ are they as bad as the men?’ ”

“ Ladies — augh ! when they’re married—yes ! but of all them ere creturs, I respects the kept Ladies, the most—on the faith of a man, I do ! Gad ! how well they knows the world—one quite invies the she rogues ; they beats the wives hollow ! Augh ! and your honour should see how they fawns and flatters, and butters up a man, and makes him think they loves

him like winkey, all the time they ruins him. They kisses money out of the miser, and sits in their satins, while the wife, 'drot her, sulks in a gingham. Oh, they be cliver creturs, and they 'll do what they likes with old Nick, when they gets there, for 'tis the old gentlemen they cozens the best ; and then," continued the Corporal, waxing more and more loquacious, for his appetite in talking grew with that it fed on,—“ then there be another set o' queer folks you 'll see in Lunnon, Sir, that is, if you falls in with 'em,—hang all together, quite in a clink. I seed lots on 'em when lived with the Colonel—Colonel Dysart, you knows—augh ?”

“ And what are they ?”

“ Rum ones, your honour ; what they calls Authors.”

“ Authors ! what the deuce had you or the Colonel to do with Authors ?”

“ Augh ! then, the Colonel was a very fine gentleman, what the larned calls a my-seen-ass, wrote little songs himself, 'crossticks, you knows, your

honour : once he made a play—'cause why, he lived with an actress !”

“ A very good reason, indeed, for emulating Shakespear ; and did the play succeed ?”

“ Fancy it did, your honour ; for the Colonel was a dab with the scissors.”

“ Scissors ! the pen, you mean ?”

“ No ! that 's what the dirty Authors make plays with ; a Lord and a Colonel, my-seen-asses, always takes the scissors.”

“ How ?”

“ Why the Colonel 's Lady—had lots of plays—and she marked a scene here—a jest there—a line in one place—a sentiment in t ' other—and the Colonel sate by with a great paper book—cut 'em out, pasted them in book. Augh ! but the Colonel pleased the town mightily.”

“ Well, so he saw a great many authors ; and did not they please you ?”

“ Why they be so damned quarrelsome,” said the Corporal, “ wringle, wrangle, wrongle, snap, growl, scratch ; that 's not what a man of the

world does ; man of the world niver quarrels ; then, too, these creturs always fancy you forgets that their father was a clargyman ; they always thinks more of their family, like, than their writings ; and if they does not get money when they wants it, they bristles up and cries, ‘ not treated like a gentleman, by God ! ’ Yet, after all, they’ve a deal of kindness in ‘em, if you knows how to manage ‘em—augh ! but, cat-kindness, paw to-day, claw to-morrow. And then they always marries young, the poor things, and have a power of children, and live on the fame and forten they *are* to get one of these days ; for, my eye ! they be the most sanguinest folks alive ! ”

“ Why, Bunting, what an observer you have been ! who could ever have imagined that you had made yourself master of so many varieties in men ! ”

“ Augh ! your honour, I had nothing to do when I was the Colonel’s valley, but to take notes to ladies and make use of my eyes. Always a ‘flective man.”

"It is odd that, with all your abilities, you did not provide better for yourself."

"'Twas not my fault," said the Corporal, quickly; "but somehow, do what will—'tis not always the clivest as foresees the best. But I be young yet, your honour!"

Walter stared at the Corporal and laughed outright: the Corporal was exceedingly piqued.

"Augh! mayhap you thinks, Sir, that 'cause not so young as you, not young at all; but, what's forty, or fifty, or fifty-five, in public life? never hear much of men afore then. 'Tis the autumn that reaps, spring sows, augh!—bother!"

"Very true and very poetical. I see you did not live among authors for nothing."

"I knows summut of language, your honour," quoth the Corporal pedantically.

"It is evident."

"For, to be a man of the world, Sir, must know all the ins and outs of speechifying; 'tis words, Sir, that makes another man's mare go your

road. Augh ! that must have been a cliver man as invented language ; wonders who 'twas—mayhap Moses, your honour ?”

“ Never mind who it was,” said Walter gravely ; “ use the gift discreetly.”

“ Umph !” said the Corporal—“ yes, your honour,” renewed he after a pause. “ It be a marvel to think on how much a man does in the way of cheating, as has the gift of the gab. Wants a Missis, talks her over—wants your purse, talks you out on it—wants a place, talks himself into it.—What makes the Parson? words—the Lawyer? words—the Parliament-man? words!—words can ruin a country, in the Big House—words save souls, in the Pulpits—words make even them ere authors, poor creturs, in every man’s mouth.—Augh ! Sir, take note of the *words*, and the *things* will take care of themselves—bother !”

“ Your reflections amaze me, Bunting,” said Walter smiling ; “ but the night begins to close in ; I trust we shall not meet with any misadventure.”

“ ‘Tis an ugsome bit of road !” said the Corporal, looking round him.

“ The pistols ?”

“ Primed and loaded, your honour.”

“ After all, Bunting, a little skirmish would be no bad sport—eh ?—especially to an old soldier like you.”

“ Augh, baugh ! ‘tis no pleasant work, fighting, without pay, at least ; ‘tis not like love and eating, your honour, the better for being, what they calls, ‘ gratis !’ ”

“ Yet I have heard you talk of the pleasure of fighting ; not for pay, Bunting, but for your King and Country !”

“ Augh ! and that’s when I wanted to cheat the poor creturs at Grassdale, your honour ; don’t take the liberty to talk stuff to my master !”

They continued thus to beguile the way, till Walter again sank into a reverie, while the Corporal, who began more and more to dislike the

aspect of the ground they had entered on, still rode by his side.

The road was heavy, and wound down the long hill which had stricken so much dismay into the Corporal's stout heart on the previous day, when he had beheld its commencement at the extremity of the town, where but for him they had *not* dined. They were now little more than a mile from the said town, the whole of the way was taken up by this hill, and the road, very different from the smoothened declivities of the present day, seemed to have been cut down the very steepest part of its centre ; loose stones, and deep ruts encreased the difficulty of the descent, and it was with a slow pace and a guarded rein that both our travellers now continued their journey. On the left side of the road was a thick and lofty hedge ; to the right, a wild, bare, savage heath, sloped downward, and just afforded a glimpse of the spires and chimneys of the town, at which the Corporal was already supping in idea ! That

incomparable personage was, however, abruptly recalled to the present instant, by a most violent stumble on the part of his hard-mouthed, Roman-nosed horse. The horse was all but down, and the Corporal all but over.

“ Damn it,” said the Corporal, slowly recovering his perpendicularity, “ and the way to Lunnon was as smooth as a bowling-green !”

Ere this rueful exclamation was well out of the Corporal’s mouth, a bullet whizzed past him from the hedge ; it went so close to his ear, that but for that lucky stumble, Jacob Bunting had been as the grass of the field, which flourisheth one moment and is cut down the next !

Startled by the sound, the Corporal’s horse made off full tear down the hill, and carried him several paces beyond his master, ere he had power to stop its career. But Walter reining up his better managed steed, looked round for the enemy, nor looked in vain.

Three men started from the hedge with a simul-

taneous shout. Walter fired, but without effect; ere he could lay hand on the second pistol, his bridle was seized, and a violent blow from a long double-handed bludgeon, brought him to the ground.

EUGENE ARAM.

BOOK III.

O. Λόπη μάλιστα γ' ἡ διαφθείρουσά μι.

M. Δαιὴ γὰρ ἡ Θεὸς, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἴαστις.

O. Μανίας τι, —

* * * * *

M. Φαντασμάτων δὲ τάδε νοσῆς ποίων ὅπο;

'ΟΡΕΞΤ. 398—407.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER IX.

FRAUD AND VIOLENCE ENTER EVEN GRASSDALE.—PETER'S NEWS.—THE LOVERS' WALK.—THE REAPPEARANCE.

Auf.—“ Whence comest thou—what wouldest thou ?”

CORIOLANUS.

ONE evening Aram and Madeline were passing through the village in their accustomed walk, when Peter Dealtry sallied forth from the Spotted Dog, and hurried up to the lovers with a countenance full of importance, and a little ruffled by fear.

“ Oh, Sir, Sir,—(Miss, your servant !)—have you heard the news? Two houses at Checkington, (a small town some miles distant from Grass-

dale,) were forcibly entered last night,—robbed, your honour, robbed. Squire Tibson was tied to his bed, his bureau rifled, himself shockingly *confused* on the head ; and the maidservant Sally—her sister lived with me, a very good girl she was,—was locked up in the—the—the—I beg pardon, Miss—was locked up in the cupboard. As to the other house, they carried off all the plate. There were no less than four men, all masked, your honour, and armed with pistols. What if they should come here ! such a thing was never heard of before in these parts. But, Sir,—but, Miss,—do not be afraid, do not ye now, for I may say with the Psalmist,

‘ But wicked men shall drink the dregs
Which they in wrath shall wring,
For I will lift my voice, and make
Them flee while I do sing !’

“ You could not find a more effectual method of putting them to flight, Peter,” said Madeline smiling ; “ but go and talk to my uncle. I know we have a whole magazine of blunderbusses and

guns at home: they may be useful now. But you are well provided in case of attack. Have you not the Corporal's famous cat Jacobina,— surely a match for fifty robbers?"

"Ay, Miss, on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, perhaps she may; but really it is no jesting matter. Them ere robbers flourish like a green bay tree, for a space at least, and it is 'nation bad sport for us poor lambs till they be cut down and withered like grass. But your house, Mr. Aram, is very lonesome like; it is out of reach of all your neighbours. Hadn't you better, Sir, take up your lodgings at the Squire's for the present?"

Madeline pressed Aram's arm, and looked up fearfully in his face. "Why, my good friend," said he to Dealtry, "robbers will have little to gain in my house, unless they are given to learned pursuits. It would be something new, Peter, to see a gang of housebreakers making off with a telescope, or a pair of globes, or a great folio covered with dust."

"Ay, your honour, but they may be the more savage for being disappointed."

"Well, well, Peter, we will see," replied Aram impatiently; "meanwhile we may meet you again at the hall. Good evening for the present."

"Do, dearest Eugene, do, for Heaven's sake," said Madeline, with tears in her eyes, as they, now turning from Dealtry, directed their steps towards the quiet valley, at the end of which the Student's house was situated, and which was now more than ever Madeline's favourite walk, "do, dearest Eugene, come up to the Manor-house till these wretches are apprehended. Consider how open *your* house is to attack; and surely there can be no necessity to remain in it now."

Aram's calm brow darkened for a moment. "What! dearest," said he, "can you be affected by the foolish fears of yon dotard? How do we know as yet, whether this improbable story have any foundation in truth. At all events, it is evidently exaggerated. Perhaps an invasion of

the poultry-yard, in which some hungry fox was the real offender, may be the true origin of this terrible tale. Nay, love, nay, do not look thus reproachfully ; it will be time enough for us when we have sifted the grounds of alarm to take our precautions ; meanwhile, do not blame me if in your presence I cannot admit fear. Oh Madeline, dear, dear Madeline, could you know, could you dream, how different life has become to me since I knew you ! Formerly, I will frankly own to you, that dark and boding apprehensions were wont to lie heavy at my heart ; the cloud was more familiar to me than the sunshine. But now I have grown a child, and can see around me nothing but hope ; my life was winter—your love has breathed it into spring."

" And yet, Eugene—yet—"

" Yet what, my Madeline ?"

" There are still moments when I have no power over your thoughts ; moments when you break away from me ; when you mutter to your-

self feelings in which I have no share, and which seem to steal the consciousness from your eye and the colour from your lip."

" Ah, indeed !" said Aram quickly ; " what ! you watch me so closely ?"

" Can you wonder that I do ?" said Madeline, with an earnest tenderness in her voice.

" You must not then, you must not," returned her lover, almost fiercely ; " I cannot bear too nice and sudden a scrutiny ; consider how long I have clung to a stern and solitary independence of thought, which allows no watch, and forbids account of itself to any one. Leave it to time and your love to win their inevitable way. Ask not too much from me now. And mark, mark, I pray you, whenever, in spite of myself, these moods you refer to darken over me, heed not, listen not—*Leave me !* solitude is their only cure ! promise me this, love—promise."

" It is a harsh request, Eugene, and I do not think I will grant you so complete a monopoly

of thought;" answered Madeline, playfully, yet half in earnest.

"Madeline," said Aram, with a deep solemnity of manner, "I ask a request on which my very love for you depends. From the depths of my soul, I implore you to grant it; yea, to the very letter."

"Why, why, this is—" began Madeline, when encountering the full, the dark, the inscrutable gaze of her strange lover, she broke off in a sudden fear, which she could not analyse; and only added in a low and subdued voice, "I promise to obey you."

As if a weight were lifted from his heart, Aram now brightened at once into himself in his happiest mood. He poured forth a torrent of grateful confidence, of buoyant love, that soon swept from the remembrance of the blushing and enchanted Madeline, the momentary fear, the sudden chillness, which his look had involuntarily stricken into her mind. And as they now wound

along the most lonely part of that wild valley, his arm twined round her waist, and his low but silver voice pouring magic into the very air she breathed—she felt perhaps a more entire and unruffled sentiment of present, and a more credulous persuasion of future, happiness, than she had ever experienced before. And Aram himself dwelt with a more lively and detailed fulness, than he was wont, on the prospects they were to share, and the security and peace which retirement would instill into their mode of life.

“ Is it not,” said he, “ with a lofty triumph that we shall look from our retreat upon the shifting passions, and the hollow loves of the distant world? We can have no petty object, no vain allurement to distract the unity of our affection: we must be all in all to each other; for what else can there be to engross our thoughts, and occupy our feelings *here* ?

“ If, my beautiful love, you have selected one whom the world might deem a strange choice for

youth and loveliness like yours; you have, at least, selected one who *can* have no idol but yourself. The poets tell you, and rightly, that solitude is the fit sphere for love; but how few are the lovers whom solitude does not fatigue! they rush into retirement, with souls unprepared for its stern joys and its unvarying tranquillity: they weary of each other, because the solitude itself to which they fled, palls upon and oppresses them. But to me, the freedom which low minds call obscurity, is the aliment of life; I do not enter the temples of Nature as the stranger, but the priest: nothing can ever tire me of the lone and august altars, on which I sacrificed my youth: and now, what Nature, what Wisdom once were to me—no, no, more, immeasurably more than these, you are! Oh, Madeline! methinks there is nothing under Heaven like the feeling which puts us apart from all that agitates, and fevers, and degrades the herd of men; which grants us to control the tenour of our future life, because it annihilates our dependence upon others,

and, while the rest of earth are hurried on, blind and unconscious, by the hand of Fate, leaves us the sole lords of our destiny ; and able, from the Past, which we have governed, to become the Prophets of our Future !”

At this moment Madeline uttered a faint shriek, and clung trembling to Aram’s arm. Amazed, and roused from his enthusiasm, he looked up, and on seeing the cause of her alarm, seemed himself transfixed, as by a sudden terror, to the earth.

But a few paces distant, standing amidst the long and rank fern that grew on either side of their path, quite motionless, and looking on the pair with a sarcastic smile, stood the ominous stranger, whom the second chapter of our first volume introduced to the reader.

For one instant Aram seemed utterly appalled and overcome ; his cheek grew the colour of death ; and Madeline felt his heart beat with a loud, a fearful force beneath the breast to which she clung. But his was not the nature any earthly dread could long abash. He whispered

to Madeline to come on ; and slowly, and with his usual firm but gliding step, continued his way.

“ Good evening, Eugene Aram,” said the stranger ; and as he spoke, he touched his hat slightly to Madeline.

“ I thank you,” replied the Student, in a calm voice ; “ do you want aught with me ?”

“ Humph !—yes, if it so please you.”

“ Pardon me, dear Madeline,” said Aram softly, and disengaging himself from her, “ but for one moment.”

He advanced to the stranger, and Madeline could not but note that, as Aram accosted him, his brow fell, and his manner seemed violent and agitated ; but she could not hear the words of either ; nor did the conference last above a minute. The stranger bowed, and turning away, soon vanished among the shrubs. Aram regained the side of his mistress.

“ Who,” cried she eagerly, “ is that fearful man ? What is his business ? What his name ?”

“ He is a man whom I knew well some four-

teen years ago," replied Aram coldly, and with ease ; " I did not then lead quite so lonely a life, and we were thrown much together. Since that time, he has been in unfortunate circumstances—rejoined the army—he was in early life a soldier, and had been disbanded—entered into business, and failed; in short, he has partaken of those vicissitudes inseparable from the life of one driven to seek the world. When he travelled this road some months ago, he accidentally heard of my residence in the neighbourhood, and naturally sought me. Poor as I am, I was of some assistance to him. His *route* brings him hither again, and he again seeks me : I suppose too that I must again aid him."

" And is that *indeed* all," said Madeline, breathing more freely ; " well, poor man, if he be your friend, he must be inoffensive—I have done him wrong. And does he want money ? I have some to give him—here Eugene !" And the simple-hearted girl put her purse into Aram's hand.

" No, dearest," said he, shrinking back ; " no,

we shall not require *your* contribution ; I can easily spare him enough for the present. But let us turn back, it grows chill."

" And why did he leave us, Eugene?"

" Because I desired him to visit me at home an hour hence."

" An hour ! then you will not sup with us to-night ?"

" No, not this night, dearest."

The conversation now ceased ; Madeline in vain endeavoured to renew it. Aram, though without relapsing into any of his absorbed reveries, answered her only in monosyllables. They arrived at the Manor-house, and Aram at the garden gate took leave of her for the night, and hastened backward towards his home. Madeline, after watching his form through the deepening shadows until it disappeared, entered the house with a listless step ; a nameless and thrilling presentiment crept to her heart ; and she could have sate down and wept, though without a cause.

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN ARAM AND THE STRANGER.

“The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me.” **MANFRED.**

MEANWHILE Aram strode rapidly through the village, and not till he had regained the solitary valley did he relax his step.

The evening had already deepened into night. Along the sere and melancholy wood, the autumnal winds crept, with a lowly, but gathering moan. Where the water held its course, a damp and ghostly mist clogged the air, but the skies were calm, and chequered only by a few clouds, that swept in long, white, spectral streaks, over the solemn stars. Now and then, the bat wheel-ed swiftly round, almost touching the figure of

the Student, as he walked musingly onward. And the owl* that before the month waned many days, would be seen no more in that region, came heavily from the trees, like a guilty thought that deserts its shade. It was one of those nights, half dim, half glorious, which mark the early decline of the year. Nature seemed restless and instinct with change; there were those signs in the atmosphere which leave the most experienced in doubt, whether the morning may rise in storm or sunshine. And in this particular period, the skiey influences seem to tincture the animal life with their own mysterious and wayward spirit of change. The birds desert their summer haunts; an unaccountable inquietude pervades the brute creation; even men in this unsettled season have considered themselves, more (than at others) stirred by the motion and whisperings of their genius. And every creature that flows upon the tide of the Universal Life of Things, feels upon the ruffled surface, the mighty and solemn change, which is at work within its depths.

* That species called the short-eared owl.

And now Aram had nearly threaded the valley, and his own abode became visible on the opening plain, when the stranger emerged from the trees to the right, and suddenly stood before the Student. "I tarried for you here, Aram," said he, "instead of seeking you at home, at the time you fixed; for there are certain private reasons which make it prudent I should keep as much as possible among the owls, and it was therefore safer, if not more pleasant, to lie here amidst the fern, than to make myself merry in the village yonder."

"And what," said Aram, "again brings you hither? Did you not say, when you visited me some months since, that you were about to settle in a different part of the country, with a relation?"

"And so I intended; but Fate, as you would say, or the Devil, as I should, ordered it otherwise. I had not long left you, when I fell in with some old friends, bold spirits and true; the brave outlaws of the road and the field. Shall I

have any shame in confessing that I preferred their society, a society not unfamiliar to me, to the dull and solitary life that I might have led in tending my old bed-ridden relation in Wales, who after all, may live these twenty years, and at the end can scarce leave me enough for a week's ill luck at the hazard-table? In a word, I joined my gallant friends, and entrusted myself to their guidance. Since then, we have cruised around the country, regaled ourselves cheerily, frightened the timid, silenced the fractious, and by the help of your fate, or my devil, have found ourselves by accident, brought to exhibit our valour in this very district, honoured by the dwelling-place of my learned friend, Eugene Aram."

"Trifle not with me, Houseman," said Aram sternly; "I scarcely yet understand you. Do you mean to imply, that yourself, and the lawless associates you say you have joined, are lying out now for plunder in these parts?"

"You say it: perhaps you heard of our exploits last night, some four miles hence?"

" Ha ! was that villainy yours ?"

" Villainy !" repeated Houseman, in a tone of sullen offence. " Come, Master Aram, these words must not pass between you and me, friends of such date, and on such a footing."

" Talk not of the past," replied Aram with a livid lip, " and call not those whom Destiny once, in despite of Nature, drove down her dark tide in a momentary companionship, by the name of friends. Friends we are not ; but while we live, there is a tie between us stronger than that of friendship."

" You speak truth and wisdom," said Houseman, sneeringly ; " for my part, I care not what you call us, friends or foes."

" Foes, foes !" exclaimed Aram abruptly, " not that. Has life no medium in its ties ?—pooh—pooh ! not foes ; *we* may not be foes to each other."

" It *were* foolish, at least at present," said Houseman carelessly.

" Look you, Houseman," continued Aram

drawing his comrade from the path into a wilder part of the scene, and, as he spoke, his words were couched in a more low and inward voice than heretofore. "Look you, I cannot live and have my life darkened thus by your presence. Is not the world wide enough for us both? Why haunt each other? what have you to gain from me? Can the thoughts that my sight recalls to you be brighter, or more peaceful, than those which start upon me, when I gaze on you? Does not a ghastly air, a charnel breath, hover about us both? Why perversely incur a torture it is so easy to avoid? Leave me—leave these scenes. All earth spreads before you—choose your pursuits, and your resting place elsewhere, but grudge me not this little spot."

"I have no wish to disturb you, Eugene Aram, but I must live; and in order to live I must obey my companions; if I deserted them, it would be to starve. They will not linger long in this district; a week, it may be; a fortnight, at most;

then, like the Indian animal, they will strip the leaves, and desert the tree. In a word, after we have swept the country, we are gone."

"Houseman, Houseman!" said Aram passionately, and frowning till his brows almost hid his eyes, but that part of the orb which they did not hide, seemed as living fire; "I now implore, but I can threaten—beware!—silence, I say;" (and he stamped his foot violently on the ground, as he saw Houseman about to interrupt him;) "listen to me throughout—Speak not to me of tarrying here—speak not of days, of weeks—every hour of which would sound upon my ear like a death-knell. Dream not of a sojourn in these tranquil shades, upon an errand of dread and violence—the minions of the law aroused against you, girt with the chances of apprehension and a shameful death——"

"And a full confession of my past sins," interrupted Houseman, laughing wildly.

"Fiend! devil!" cried Aram, grasping his comrade by the throat, and shaking him with a

vehemence that Houseman, though a man of great strength and sinew, impotently attempted to resist.

"Breathe but another word of such import; dare to menace me with the vengeance of such a thing as thou, and, by the God above us, I will lay thee dead at my feet!"

"Release my throat, or you will commit murder," gasped Houseman with difficulty, and growing already black in the face.

Aram suddenly relinquished his gripe, and walked away with a hurried step, muttering to himself. He then returned to the side of Houseman, whose flesh still quivered either with rage or fear, and, his own self-possession completely restored, stood gazing upon him with folded arms, and his usual deep and passionless composure of countenance; and Houseman, if he could not boldly confront, did not altogether shrink from, his eye. So there and thus they stood, at a little distance from each other, both silent, and yet with something unutterably fearful in their silence.

"Houseman," said Aram at length, in a calm, yet a hollow voice, "it may be that I was wrong; but there lives no man on earth, save you, who could thus stir my blood,—nor you with ease. And know, when you menace me, that it is not your menace that subdues or shakes my spirit; but that which robs my veins of their even tenor is that you should deem your menace *could* have such power, or that you,—that any man,—should arrogate to himself the thought that he could, by the prospect of whatsoever danger, humble the soul and curb the will of Eugene Aram. And now I am calm; say what you will, I cannot be vexed again."

"I have done," replied Houseman coldly; "I have *nothing* to say; farewell!" and he moved away among the trees.

"Stay," cried Aram in some agitation; "stay; we must not part thus. Look you, Houseman, you say you would starve should you leave your present associates. That may not be; quit them this night,—this moment: leave the neighbourhood, and the little in my power is at your will."

"As to that," said Houseman drily, "what is

in your power is, I fear me, so little as not to counterbalance the advantages I should lose in quitting my companions. I expect to net some three hundreds before I leave these parts."

"Some three hundreds!" repeated Aram recoiling; "that were indeed beyond me. I told you when we last met that it is only by an annual payment I draw the little wealth I have."

"I remember it. I do not ask you for money, Eugene Aram; these hands can maintain me," replied Houseman, smiling grimly. "I told you at once the sum I expected to receive *somewhere*, in order to prove that you need not vex your benevolent heart to afford me relief. I knew well the sum I named was out of your power, unless indeed it be part of the marriage portion you are about to receive with your bride. Fie, Aram! what, secrets from your old friend! You see I pick up the news of the place without your confidence."

Again Aram's face worked, and his lip quivered; but he conquered his passion with a surprising self-command, and answered mildly,

"I do not know, Houseman, whether I shall

receive any marriage portion whatsoever : If I do, I am willing to make some arrangement by which I could *engage* you to molest me no more. But it yet wants several days to my marriage ; quit the neighbourhood now, and a month hence let us meet again. Whatever at that time may be my resources, you shall frankly know them."

" It cannot be," said Houseman ; " I quit not these districts without a certain sum, not in hope, but possession. But why interfere with me ? I seek not my hoards in your coffer. Why so anxious that I should not breathe the same air as yourself ?"

" It matters not," replied Aram, with a deep and ghastly voice ; " but when you are near me, I feel as if I were with the dead ; it is a spectre that I would exorcise in ridding me of your presence. Yet this is not what I now speak of. You are engaged, according to your own lips, in lawless and midnight schemes, in which you may, (and the tide of chances runs towards that bourne,) be seized by the hand of Justice."

"Ho," said Houseman, sullenly, "and was it not for saying that you feared this, and its probable consequences, that you well-nigh stifled me, but now?—so truth may be said one moment with impunity, and the next at peril of life! These are the subtleties of you wise schoolmen, I suppose. Your Aristotles, and your Zenos, your Platos, and your Epicurus's, teach you notable distinctions, truly!"

"Peace!" said Aram; "are we at all times ourselves? Are the passions never our masters? You maddened me into anger; behold, I am now calm: the subjects discussed between myself and you, are of life and death; let us approach them with our senses collected and prepared. What, Houseman, are you bent upon your own destruction, as well as mine, that you persevere in courses which *must* end in a death of shame?"

"What else can I do? I will not work, and I cannot live like you in a lone wilderness on a crust of bread. Nor is my name like yours, mouthed by the praise of honest men: my cha-

racter is marked ; those who once knew me, shun now. I have no resource for society, (for *I* cannot face myself alone,) but in the fellowship of men like myself, whom the world has thrust from its pale. I have no resource for bread, save in the pursuits that are branded by justice, and accompanied with snares and danger. What would you have me do ?"

" Is it not better," said Aram, " to enjoy peace and safety upon a small but certain pittance, than to live thus from hand to mouth ? vibrating from wealth to famine, and the rope around your neck, sleeping and awake ? Seek your relation ; in that quarter, you yourself said your character was not branded : live with him, and know the quiet of easy days, and I promise you, that if aught be in my power to make your lot more suitable to your wants, so long as you lead the life of honest men, it shall be freely yours. Is not this better, Houseman, than a short and sleepless career of dread ?"

" Aram," answered Houseman, " are you, in truth, calm enough to hear me speak ? I warn

you; that if again you forget yourself, and lay hands on me——”

“ Threaten not, threaten not,” interrupted Aram, “but proceed; all within me is now still and cold as ice. Proceed without fear of scruple.”

“ Be it so; we do not love one another: you have affected contempt for me—and I—I—no matter—I am not a stone or stick, that I should not feel. You have scorned me—you have outraged me—you have not assumed towards me even the decent hypocrisies of prudence—yet now you would ask of me, the conduct, the sympathy, the forbearance, the concession of friendship. You wish that I should quit these scenes, where, to my judgment, a certain advantage waits me, solely that I may lighten your breast of its selfish fears. You dread the dangers that await me on your own account. And in my apprehension, you forebode your own doom. You ask me, nay, not ask, you would command, you would awe me to sacrifice my will and wishes, in order to soothe your anxieties, and strengthen your own safety. Mark me!

Eugene Aram, I have been treated as a tool, and I will not be governed as a friend. I will not stir from the vicinity of your home, till my designs be fulfilled,—I enjoy, I hug myself in your torments. I exult in the terror with which you will hear of each new enterprise, each new daring, each new triumph of myself and my gallant comrades. And now I am avenged for the affront you put upon me."

Though Aram trembled, with suppressed passions, from limb to limb, his voice was still calm, and his lip even wore a smile as he answered,—

" I was prepared for this, Houseman, you utter nothing that surprises or appalls me. You hate me; it is natural; men united as we are, rarely look on each other with a friendly or a pitying eye. But Houseman; I KNOW YOU!—you are a man of vehement passions, but interest with you is yet stronger than passion. If not, our conference is over. Go—and do your worst."

" You are right, most learned scholar; I can fetter the tiger within, in his deadliest rage, by a golden chain."

"Well, then, Houseman, it is not your interest to betray me—my destruction is your own."

"I grant it; but if I am apprehended, and to be hung for robbery?"

"It will be no longer an object to you, to care for my safety. Assuredly, I comprehend this. But my interest induces me to wish that you be removed from the peril of apprehension, and your interest replies, that if you can obtain equal advantages in security, you would forego advantages accompanied by peril. Say what we will, wander as we will, it is to this point that we must return at last."

"Nothing can be clearer; and were you a rich man, Eugene Aram, or could you obtain your bride's dowry (no doubt a respectable sum) in advance, the arrangement might at once be settled."

Aram gasped for breath, and as usual with him in emotion, made several strides forward, muttering rapidly, and indistinctly to himself, and then returned.

"Even were this possible, it would be but a short reprieve; I could not trust you; the sum

would be spent, and I again in the state to which you have compelled me now; but without the means again to relieve myself. No, no! if the blow must fall, be it so one day as another."

"As you will," said Houseman; "but—Just at that moment, a long shrill whistle sounded below, as from the water. Houseman paused abruptly—"That signal is from my comrades; I must away. Hark, again! Farewell, Aram."

"Farewell, if it must be so," said Aram, in a tone of dogged sullenness; "but to-morrow, should you know of any means by which I could feel secure, beyond the security of your own word, from your future molestation, I might—yet how?"

"To-morrow," said Houseman, "I cannot answer for myself; it is not always that I can leave my comrades; a natural jealousy makes them suspicious of the absence of their friends. Yet hold; *the night* after to-morrow, the Sabbath night, most virtuous Aram, I can meet you—but not here—some miles hence. You know the foot of the Devil's Crag, by the waterfall; it is a spot quiet and shaded enough in all

conscience for our interview ; and I will tell you a secret I would trust to no other man—(hark, again !)—it is close by our present lurking-place. Meet me there !—it would, indeed, be pleasanter to hold our conference under shelter—but just at present, I would rather not trust myself beneath any honest man's roof in this neighbourhood. Adieu ! on Sunday night, one hour before midnight.”

The robber, for such then he was, waved his hand, and hurried away in the direction from which the signal seemed to come.

Aram gazed after him, but with vacant eyes ; and remained for several minutes rooted to the spot, as if the very life had left him.

“ The Sabbath night !” said he, at length, moving slowly on ; “ and I must spin forth my existence in trouble and fear till then—*till* then ! what remedy can I *then* invent ? It is clear that I can have no dependance on his word, if won ; and I have not even aught wherewith to buy it. But courage, courage, my heart ; and work thou, my busy brain ! Ye have never failed me yet !”

CHAPTER XI.

FRESH ALARM IN THE VILLAGE.—LESTER'S VISIT TO ARAM.—A TRAIT OF DELICATE KINDNESS IN THE STUDENT.—MADELINE.—HER PRONENESS TO CONFIDE.—THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN LESTER AND ARAM.—THE PERSONS BY WHOM IT IS INTERRUPTED.

“ Not my own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love controul.”

SHAKSPEARE'S SONNETS.

“ Commend me to their love, and I am proud, say,
That my occasions have found time to use them
Toward a supply of money ; let the request
Be fifty talents.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

THE next morning the whole village was alive and bustling with terror and consternation. Another, and a yet more daring robbery, had been committed in the neighbourhood, and the police of the county town had been summoned, and were now busy in search of the offenders. Aram had

been early disturbed by the officious anxiety of some of his neighbours ; and it wanted yet some hours of noon, when Lester himself came to seek and consult with the Student.

Aram was alone in his large and gloomy chamber, surrounded, as usual, by his books, but not as usual engaged in their contents. With his face leaning on his hand, and his eyes gazing on a dull fire, that crept heavily upward through the damp fuel, he sate by his hearth, listless, but wrapt in thought.

“ Well, my friend,” said Lester, displacing the books from one of the chairs, and drawing the seat near the Student’s—“ you have ere this heard the news, and indeed in a county so quiet as ours, these outrages appear the more fearful, from their being so unlooked for. We must set a guard in the village, Aram, and you *must* leave this defenceless hermitage and come down to us ; not for your own sake,—but consider you will be an additional safeguard to Madeline. You will lock up the house, dismiss your poor old governante

to her friends in the village, and walk back with me at once to the hall."

Aram turned uneasily in his chair.

"I feel your kindness," said he after a pause, "but I cannot accept it—Madeline," he stopped short at that name, and added in an altered voice; "no, I will be one of the watch, Lester; I will look to her—to your—safety; but I cannot sleep under another roof. I am superstitious, Lester—superstitious. I have made a vow, a foolish one perhaps, but I dare not break it. And my vow binds me, save on indispensable and urgent necessity, not to pass a night any where but in my own home."

"But there *is* necessity."

"My conscience says not," said Aram smiling: "peace, my good friend, we cannot conquer men's foibles, or wrestle with men's scruples."

Lester in vain attempted to shake Aram's resolution on this head; he found him immovable, and gave up the effort in despair.

"Well," said he, "at all events we have set up a watch, and can spare you a couple of defenders.

They shall reconnoitre in the neighbourhood of your house, if you persevere in your determination, and this will serve in some slight measure to satisfy poor Madeline."

" Be it so," replied Aram ; " and dear Madeline herself, is she so alarmed ? "

And now in spite of all the more wearing and haggard thoughts that preyed upon his breast, and the dangers by which he conceived himself beset, the Student's face, as he listened with eager attention to every word that Lester uttered concerning his niece, testified how alive he yet was to the least incident that related to Madeline, and how easily her innocent and peaceful remembrance could allure him from himself.

" This room," said Lester, looking round, " will be, I conclude, after Madeline's own heart ; but will you always suffer her here ? students do not sometimes like even the gentlest interruption."

" I have not forgotten that Madeline's comfort requires some more cheerful retreat than this," said Aram, with a melancholy expression of countenance. " Follow me, Lester ; I meant this for

a little surprise to her. But Heaven only knows if I shall ever show it to herself?"

" Why? what doubt of that can even your boding temper discover?"

" We are as the wanderers in the desert," answered Aram, " who are taught wisely to distrust their own senses: that which they gaze upon as the waters of existence, is often but a faithless vapour that would lure them to destruction."

In thus speaking he had traversed the room, and, opening a door, showed a small chamber with which it communicated, and which Aram had fitted up with evident, and not ungraceful care. Every article of furniture that Madeline might most fancy, he had sent for from the neighbouring town. And some of the lighter and more attractive books that he possessed, were ranged around on shelves, above which were vases, intended for flowers; the window opened upon a little plot that had been lately broken up into a small garden, and was already intersected with walks, and rich with shrubs.

There was something in this chamber that so entirely contrasted the one it adjoined, something so light, and cheerful, and even gay in its decoration and its *tout ensemble*, that Lester uttered an exclamation of delight and surprise. And indeed it did appear to him touching, that this austere scholar, so wrapt in thought, and so inattentive to the common forms of life, should have manifested this tender and delicate consideration. In another it would have been nothing, but in Aram, it was a trait, that brought involuntary tears to the eyes of the good Lester. Aram observed them : he walked hastily away to the window, and sighed heavily ; this did not escape his friend's notice, and after commenting on the attractions of the little room—Lester said :

“ You seem oppressed in spirits, Eugene : can any thing have chanced to disturb you, beyond, at least, these alarms which are enough to agitate the nerves of the hardiest of us ? ”

“ No,” said Aram ; “ I had no sleep last night, and my health is easily affected, and with my

health my mind ; but let us go to Madeline ; the sight of her will revive me."

They then strolled down to the Manor-house, and met by the way a band of the younger heroes of the village, who had volunteered to act as a patrol, and who were now marshalled by Peter Dealtry, in a fit of heroic enthusiasm.

Although it was broad daylight, and, consequently, there was little cause of immediate alarm, the worthy publican carried on his shoulder a musket on full cock ; and each moment he kept peeping about, as if not only every bush, but every blade of grass contained an ambuscade, ready to spring up the instant he was off his guard. By his side the redoubted Jacobina, who had transferred to her new master, the attachment she had originally possessed for the Corporal, trotted peeringly along, her tail perpendicularly cocked, and her ears moving to and fro, with a most incomparable air of vigilant sagacity. The cautious Peter every now and then checked her ardour, as she was about to quicken her step, and

enliven the march by the gambols better adapted to serener times.

“ Soho, Jacobina, soho ! gently, girl, gently ; thou little knowest the dangers that may beset thee. Come up, my good fellows, come to the Spotted Dog ; I will tap a barrel on purpose for you ; and we will settle the plan of defence for the night. Jacobina, come in, I say, come in,

‘ Lest, like a lion, they thee tear,
And rend in pieces small ;
While there is none to succour thee,
And rid thee out of thrall.’

What ho, there ! Oh ! I beg your honour’s pardon ! Your servant, Mr. Aram.”

“ What, patrolling already ?” said the squire ; “ your men will be tired before they are wanted ; reserve their ardour for the night.”

“ Oh, your Honour, I have only been beating up for recruits ; and we are going to consult a bit at home. Ah ! what a pity the Corporal isn’t here : he would have been a tower of strength unto the righteous. But howsoever, I do my best to supply his place—Jacobina, child, be still : I

can't say as I knows the musket-service, your honour ; but I fancy's as how, like Joe Roarjug, the Methodist, we can do it extemporaneous-like at a pinch."

"A bold heart, Peter, is the best preparation," said the squire.

"And," quoth Peter quickly, "what saith the worshipful Mister Sternhold, in the 45th psalm, 5th verse,

' Go forth with godly speed, in meekness, truth, and might,
And thy right hand shall thee instruct in works of dreadful
might.'"

Peter quoted these verses, especially the last, with a truculent frown, and a brandishing of the musket, that surprisingly encouraged the hearts of his little armament ; and with a general murmur of enthusiasm, the warlike band marched off to the Spotted Dog.

Lester and his companion found Madeline and Ellinor standing at the window of the hall ; and Madeline's light step was the first that sprang forward to welcome their return : even the face of the Student brightened, when he saw the kindling eye, the parted lip, the buoyant form, from which

the pure and innocent gladness she felt on seeing him broke forth.

There was a remarkable *trustingness*, if I may so speak, in Madeline's disposition. Thoughtful and grave as she was, by nature, she was yet ever inclined to the more sanguine colourings of life; she never turned to the future with fear—a placid sentiment of Hope slept at her heart—she was one who surrendered herself with a fond and implicit faith to the guidance of all she loved ; and to the chances of life. It was a sweet indolence of the mind, which made one of her most beautiful traits of character ; there is something so unselfish in tempers reluctant to despond. You see that such persons are not occupied with their own existence; they are not fretting the calm of the present life, with the egotisms of care, and conjecture, and calculation : if they learn anxiety, it is for another; but in *the heart* of that other, how entire is their trust !

It was this disposition in Madeline which perpetually charmed, and yet perpetually wrung, the

soul of her wild lover ; and as she now delightedly hung upon his arm, uttering her joy at seeing him safe, and presently forgetting that there ever had been cause for alarm, his heart was filled with the most gloomy sense of horror and desolation. “ What,” thought he, “ if this poor, unconscious girl could dream that at this moment I am girded with peril, from which I see no ultimate escape ? Delay it as I will, it seems as if the blow must come at last. What, if she could think how fearful is my interest in these outrages, that in all probability, if their authors are detected, there is one who will drag me into their ruin ; that I am given over, bound and blinded, into the hands of another ; and that other, a man steeled to mercy, and withheld from my destruction by a thread—a thread that a blow on himself would snap. Great God ! wherever I turn, I see despair ! And she—she clings to me ; and beholding me, thinks the whole earth is filled with hope ! ”

While these thoughts darkened his mind, Madeline drew him onward into the more sequestered

walks of the garden, to show him some flowers she had transplanted. And when an hour afterwards he returned to the hall, so soothing had been the influence of her looks and words upon Aram, that if he had not forgotten the situation in which he stood, he had at least calmed himself to regard with a steady eye the chances of escape.

The meal of the day passed as cheerfully as usual, and when Aram and his host were left over their abstemious potations, the former proposed a walk before the evening deepened. Lester readily consented, and they sauntered into the fields. The Squire soon perceived that something was on Aram's mind, of which he felt evident embarrassment in ridding himself: at length the Student said rather abruptly :

" My dear friend, I am but a bad beggar, and therefore let me get over my request as expeditiously as possible. You said to me once that you intended bestowing some dowry upon Madeline; a dowry I would and could willingly dis-

pense with ; but should you of that sum be now able to spare me some portion as a loan,—should you have some three hundred pounds with which you could accommodate me.—”

“ Say no more, Eugene, say no more,” interrupted the Squire,—“ you can have double that amount. Your preparations for your approaching marriage, I ought to have foreseen, must have occasioned you some inconvenience ; you can have six hundred pounds from me to-morrow.”

Aram’s eyes brightened. “ It is too much, too much, my generous friend,” said he ; “ the half suffices—but, but, a debt of old standing presses me urgently, and to-morrow, or rather Monday morning, is the time fixed for payment.”

“ Consider it arranged,” said Lester, putting his hand on Aram’s arm, and then leaning on it gently, he added, “ And now that we are on this subject, let me tell you what I intended as a gift to you, and my dear Madeline ; it is but small, but my estates are rigidly entailed on Walter,

and of poor value in themselves, and it is half the savings of many years."

The Squire then named a sum, which, however small it may seem to our reader, was not considered a despicable portion for the daughter of a small country squire at that day, and was in reality, a generous sacrifice for one whose whole income was scarcely, at the most, seven hundred a year. The sum mentioned doubled that now to be lent, and which was of course a part of it ; an equal portion was reserved for Ellinor.

"And to tell you the truth," said the Squire, "you must give me some little time for the remainder—for not thinking some months ago it would be so soon wanted, I laid out eighteen hundred pounds, in the purchase of Winclose Farm, six of which, (the remainder of your share,) I can pay off at the end of the year ; the other twelve, Ellinor's portion, will remain a mortgage on the farm itself. And between us," added the Squire, "I do hope that I need be in no hurry respecting

her, dear girl. When Walter returns, I trust matters may be arranged, in a manner, and through a channel, that would gratify the most cherished wish of my heart. I am convinced that Ellinor is exactly suited to him ; and, unless he should lose his senses for some one else in the course of his travels, I trust that he will not be long returned before he will make the same discovery. I think of writing to him very shortly after your marriage, and making him promise, at all events, to revisit us at Christmas. Ah ! Eugene, we shall be a happy party, then, I trust. And be assured, that we shall beat up your quarters, and put your hospitality, and Madeline's housewifery to the test."

Therewith the good Squire ran on for some minutes in the warmth of his heart, dilating on the fireside prospects before them, and rallying the Student on those secluded habits, which he promised him he should no longer indulge with impunity.

"But it is growing dark," said he, awaking from the theme which had carried him away,



“and by this time Peter and our patrol will be at the hall. I told them to look up in the evening, in order to appoint their several duties and stations—let us turn back. Indeed, Aram, I can assure you, that I, for my own part, have some strong reasons to take precautions against any attack; for besides the old family plate, (though that’s not much,) I have,—you know the bureau in the parlour to the left of the hall—well, I have in that bureau three hundred guineas, which I have not as yet been able to take to safe hands at —, and which, by the way, will be yours to-morrow. So, you see, it would be no light misfortune to me to be robbed.”

“Hist!” said Aram, stopping short, “I think I heard steps on the other side of the hedge.”

The Squire listened, but heard nothing; the senses of his companion were, however, remarkably acute, more especially that of hearing.

“There is certainly some one; nay, I catch the steps of *two* persons,” whispered he to Lester.

"Let us come round the hedge by the gap below."

They both quickened their pace, and gaining the other side of the hedge, did indeed perceive two men in carters' frocks, strolling on towards the village.

"They are strangers too," said the Squire suspiciously, "not Grassdale men. Humph! could they have overheard us, think you?"

"If men whose business it is to overhear their neighbours—yes; but not if they be honest men," answered Aram, in one of those shrewd remarks which he often uttered, and which seemed almost incompatible with the tenor of the quiet and abstruse pursuits that he had adopted, and that generally deaden the mind to worldly wisdom.

They had now approached the strangers, who, however, appeared mere rustic clowns, and who pulled off their hats with the wonted obeisance of their tribe.

"Hollo, my men," said the Squire, assuming

his magisterial air, for the mildest Squire in Christendom can play the Bashaw, when he remembers he is a Justice of the Peace. "Hollo! what are you doing here this time of day? you are not after any good, I fear."

"We ax pardon, your honour," said the elder clown, in the peculiar accent of the country, "but we be come from Gladsmuir; and be going to work at Squire Nixon's at Mow-hall, on Monday; so as I has a brother living on the green afore the Squire's, we be a-going to sleep there to-night and spend the Sunday, your honour."

"Humph! humph! What's your name?"

"Joe Wood, your honour, and this here chap is, Will Hutchings."

"Well, well, go along with you," said the Squire: "And mind what you are about. I should not be surprised if you snare one of Squire Nixon's hares by the way."

"Oh, well and indeed, your honour."—

"Go along, go along," said the Squire, and away went the men.

"They seem honest bumpkins enough," observed Lester.

"It would have pleased me better," said Aram, "had the speaker of the two particularized less; and you observed that he seemed eager not to let his companion speak; that is a little suspicious."

"Shall I call them back?" asked the Squire.

"Why it is scarcely worth while," said Aram; "perhaps I over refine. And now I look again at them, they seem really what they affect to be. No, it is useless to molest the poor wretches any more. There is something, Lester, humbling to human pride in a rustic's life. It grates against the heart to think of the tone in which we unconsciously permit ourselves to address him. We see in him humanity in its simple state; it is a sad thought to feel that we despise it; that all we respect in our species is what has been created by art; the gaudy dress, the glittering equipage, or even the cultivated intellect; the mere and naked material of Nature, we eye with indifference or trample on with disdain. Poor child of toil, from

the grey dawn to the setting sun, one long task!—no idea elicited—no thought awakened beyond those that suffice to make him the machine of others—the serf of the hard soil! And then too, mark how we scowl upon his scanty holidays, how we hedge in his mirth with laws, and turn his hilarity into crime! We make the whole of the gay world, wherein we walk and take our pleasure, to him a place of snares and perils. If he leave his labour for an instant, in that instant how many temptations spring up to him! And yet we have no mercy for *his* errors; the gaol—the transport-ship—the gallows; those are our sole lecture-books, and our only methods of expostulation—ah, fie on the disparities of the world! They cripple the heart, they blind the sense, they concentrate the thousand links between man and man, into the two basest of earthly ties—servility, and pride. Methinks the devils laugh out when they hear us tell the boor that his soul is as glorious and eternal as our own; and yet when in the grinding drudgery of his life, not a spark of that soul can

be called forth ; when it sleeps, walled around in its lumpish clay, from the cradle to the grave, without a dream to stir the deadness of its torpor."

" And yet, Aram," said Lester, " the Lords of science have their ills. Exalt the soul as you will, you cannot raise it above pain. Better, perhaps, to let it sleep, when in waking it looks only upon a world of trial."

" You say well, you say well," said Aram smiting his heart, " and I suffered a foolish sentiment to carry me beyond the sober boundaries of our daily sense."

CHAPTER XII.

MILITARY PREPARATIONS.—THE COMMANDER AND HIS
MAN.—ARAM IS PERSUADED TO PASS THE NIGHT AT
THE MANOR-HOUSE.

Falstaff.—“Bid my Lieutenant Peto meet me at the town’s end. * * * * I pressed me none but such toasts and butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins’ heads.”—

HENRY IV.

THEY had scarcely reached the Manor-house, before the rain, which the clouds had portended throughout the whole day, began to descend in torrents, and to use the strong expression of the Roman poet—the night *rushed* down, black and sudden, over the face of the earth.

The new watch were not by any means the hardy and experienced soldiery, by whom rain and darkness are unheeded. They looked with great dismay upon the character of the night in which

their campaign was to commence. The valorous Peter, who had sustained his own courage by repeated applications to a little bottle, which he never failed to carry about him in all the more bustling and enterprising occasions of life, endeavoured, but with partial success, to maintain the ardour of his band. Seated in the servants' hall of the Manor-house, in a large arm-chair, Jacobina on his knee, and his trusty musket, which, to the great terror of the womankind, had never been uncocked throughout the day, still grasped in his right hand, while the stock was grounded on the floor; he indulged in martial harangues, plentifully interlarded with plagiarisms from the worshipful translations of Messrs. Sternhold and Hopkins, and psalmodic versions of a more doubtful authorship. And when at the hour of ten, which was the appointed time, he led his warlike force, which consisted of six rustics, armed with sticks of incredible thickness, three guns, one pistol, a broadsword, and a pitchfork, (a weapon likely to be more effectively used than

all the rest put together;) when at the hour of ten he led them up to the room above, where they were to be passed in review before the critical eye of the Squire, with Jacobina leading the on-guard, you could not fancy a prettier picture for a hero in a little way, than mine host of the Spotted Dog.

His hat was fastened tight on his brows by a blue pocket-handkerchief; he wore a spencer of a light brown drugget, a world too loose, above a leather jerkin; his breeches of corduroy, were met all of a sudden half way up the thigh, by a detachment of Hessians, formerly in the service of the Corporal, and bought some time since by Peter Dealtry to wear when employed in shooting snipes for the Squire, to whom he occasionally performed the office of game-keeper; suspended round his wrist by a bit of black ribbon, was his constable's baton; he shouldered his musket gallantly, and he carried his person as erect as if the least deflexion from its perpendicularity were to cost him his life. One may judge of the revo-

lution that had taken place in the village, when so peaceable a man as Peter Dealtry was thus metamorphosed into a commander-in-chief. The rest of the regiment hung sheepishly back; each trying to get as near to the door, and as far from the ladies, as possible. But Peter having made up his mind, that a hero should only look straight forward, did not condescend to turn round, to perceive the irregularity of his line. Secure in his own existence, he stood truculently forth, facing the Squire, and prepared to receive his plaudits.

Madeline and Aram sat apart at one corner of the hearth, and Ellinor leaned over the chair of the former; the mirth that she struggled to suppress from being audible, mantling over her arch face and laughing eyes; while the Squire, taking the pipe from his mouth, turned round on his easy chair, and nodded complacently to the little corps, and the great commander.

"We are all ready now, your honour," said

"

Peter, in a voice that did not seem to belong to his body, so big did it sound, " all hot, all eager."

" Why you yourself are a host, Peter," said Ellinor with affected gravity; " your sight alone would frighten an army of robbers: who could have thought you could assume so military an air? The Corporal himself was never so upright!"

" I have practised my present nattitude all the day, Miss," said Peter, proudly, " and I believe I may now say as Mr. Sternhold says or sings, in the twenty-sixth Psalm, verse twelfth.

' My foot is stayed for all assays,
It standeth well and right,
Wherefore to God—will I give praise
In all the people's sight !'

Jacobina, behave yourself, child. I don't think, your honour, that we miss the Corporal so much as I fancied at first, for we all does very well without him."

" Indeed you are a most worthy substitute,

Peter ; and now, Nell, just reach me my hat and cloak ; I will set you at your posts : you will have an ugly night of it."

" Very indeed, your honour," cried all the army, speaking for the first time.

" Silence—order—discipline," said Peter gruffly.

" March !"

But instead of *marching* across the hall, the recruits huddled up one after the other, like a flock of geese, whom Jacobina might be supposed to have set in motion, and each scraping to the ladies, as they shuffled, sneaked, bundled, and bustled out at the door.

" We are well guarded now, Madeline," said Ellinor ; " I fancy we may go to sleep as safely as if there were not a housebreaker in the world."

" Why," said Madeline, " let us trust they will be more efficient than they seem, though I cannot persuade myself that we shall really need them. One might almost as well conceive a tiger in our arbour, as a robber in Grassdale. But dear, dear Eugene, do not—do not leave us this

night ; Walter's room is ready for you, and if it were only to walk across that valley in such weather, it would be cruel to leave us. Let me beseech you ; come, you cannot, you dare not refuse me such a favour."

Aram pleaded his vow, but it was overruled ; Madeline proved herself a most exquisite casuist in setting it aside. One by one his objections were broken down ; and how, as he gazed into those eyes, could he keep any resolution, that Madeline wished him to break ! The power she possessed over him seemed exactly in proportion to his impregnability to every one else. The surface on which the diamond cuts its easy way, will yield to no more ignoble instrument ; it is easy to shatter it, but by only one substance can it be impressed. And in this instance Aram had but one secret and strong cause to prevent his yielding to Madeline's wishes ;—if he remained at the house this night, how could he well avoid a similar compliance the next ? And on the next was his interview with Houseman.

This reason was not, however, strong enough to enable him to resist Madeline's soft entreaties ; he trusted to the time to furnish him with excuses, and when Lester returned, Madeline with a triumphant air informed him that Aram had consented to be their guest for the night."

" Your influence is indeed greater than mine," said Lester, wringing his hat as the delicate fingers of Ellinor loosened his cloak ; " yet one can scarcely think our friend sacrifices much in concession, after proving the weather without. I should pity our poor patrole most exceedingly, if I were not thoroughly assured that within two hours every one of them will have quietly slunk home ; and even Peter himself, when he has exhausted his bottle, will be the first to set the example. However, I have stationed two of the men near our house, and the rest at equal distances along the village."

" Do you really think they will go home, Sir ?" said Ellinor, in a little alarm ; " why they would

be worse than I thought them, if they were driven to bed by the rain. I knew they could not stand a pistol, but a shower, however hard, I did imagine would scarcely quench their valour."

"Never mind, girl," said Lester, gaily chucking her under the chin, "we are quite strong enough now to resist them. You see Madeline has grown as brave as a lioness—Come, girls, come, let's have supper, and stir up the fire. And, Nell, where are my slippers?"

And thus on the little family scene, the cheerful wood fire flickering against the polished wainscot; the supper table arranged, the Squire drawing his oak chair towards it, Ellinor mixing his negus; and Aram and Madeline, though three times summoned to the table, and having three times answered to the summons, still lingering apart by the hearth—let us drop the curtain.

We have only, ere we close our chapter, to observe, that when Lester conducted Aram to his chamber he placed in his hands an order payable

at the county town, for three hundred pounds. “The rest,” he said in a whisper, “is below, where I mentioned; and there in my secret drawer it had better rest till the morning.”

The good Squire then, putting his finger to his lip, hurried away, to avoid the thanks, which, indeed, however he might feel them, Aram was no dexterous adept in expressing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SISTERS ALONE.—THE GOSSIP OF LOVE.—AN ALARM—
AND AN EVENT.

Juliet.—My true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

Eros.—Oh, a man in arms;
His weapon drawn, too!—THE FALSE ONE.

IT was a custom with the two sisters, when they repaired to their chamber for the night, to sit conversing, sometimes even for hours, before they finally retired to bed. This indeed was the usual time for their little confidences, and their mutual dilations over those hopes and plans for the future, which always occupy the larger share of the thoughts and conversation of the young. I do not know any thing in the world more lovely

than such conferences between two beings who have no secrets to relate but what arise, all fresh, from the springs of a guiltless heart,—those pure and beautiful mysteries of an unsullied nature which warm us to hear; and we think with a sort of wonder when we feel how arid experience has made ourselves, that so much of the dew and sparkle of existence still linger in the nooks and valleys, which are as yet virgin of the sun and of mankind.

The sisters this night were more than commonly indifferent to sleep. Madeline sate by the small but bright hearth of the chamber, in her night dress, and Ellinor, who was much prouder of her sister's beauty than her own, was employed in knotting up the long and lustrous hair which fell in rich luxuriance over Madeline's throat and shoulders.

"There certainly never *was* such beautiful hair!" said Ellinor admiringly; "and, let me see,—yes,—on Thursday fortnight I may be dressing it, perhaps, for the last time—heigho!"

“Don’t flatter yourself that you are so near the end of your troublesome duties,” said Madeline, with her pretty smile, which had been much brighter and more frequent of late than it was formerly wont to be, so that Lester had remarked “That Madeline really appeared to have become the lighter and gayer of the two.”

“You will often come to stay with us for weeks together, at least till—till you have a double right to be mistress here. Ah! my poor hair,—you need not pull it so hard.”

“Be quiet, then,” said Ellinor, half laughing, and wholly blushing.

“Trust me, I have not been in love myself without learning its signs; and I venture to prophesy that within six months you will come to consult me whether or not,—for there is a great deal to be said on both sides of the question,—you can make up your mind to sacrifice your own wishes, and marry Walter Lester. Ah!—gently, gently. Nell—”

“Promise to be quiet.”

"I will—I will; but you began it."

As Ellinor now finished her task, and kissed her sister's forehead, she sighed deeply.

"Happy Walter!" said Madeline.

"I was not sighing for Walter, but for you."

"For me?—impossible! I cannot imagine any part of my *future* life that can cost you a sigh. Ah! that I were more worthy of my happiness."

"Well, then," said Ellinor, "I sighed for myself;—I sighed to think we should so soon be parted, and that the continuance of your society would then depend not on our mutual love, but the will of another."

"What, Ellinor, and can you suppose that Eugene,—my Eugene,—would not welcome you as warmly as myself? Ah! you misjudge him; I know you have not yet perceived how tender a heart lies beneath all that melancholy and reserve."

"I feel, indeed," said Ellinor warmly, "as if it were impossible that one whom you love should not be all that is good and noble; yet if this

reserve of his should increase, as is at least possible, with increasing years ; if our society should become again, as it once was, distasteful to him, should I not lose you, Madeline ?”

“ But his reserve cannot increase : do you not perceive how much it is softened already ? Ah ! be assured that I will charm it away.”

“ But what is the cause of the melancholy that even now, at times, evidently preys upon him ?—has he never revealed it to you ?”

“ It is merely the early and long habit of solitude and study, Ellinor,” replied Madeline ; “ and shall I own to you I would scarcely wish *that* away ; his tenderness itself seems linked with his melancholy. It is like a sad but gentle music, that brings tears into our eyes, but which we would not change for gayer airs for the world.”

“ Well, I must own,” said Ellinor, reluctantly, “ that I no longer wonder at your infatuation ; I can no longer chide you as I once did ; there is, assuredly, something in his voice, his look, which irresistibly sinks into the heart. And there are

moments when, what with his eyes and forehead, his countenance seems more beautiful, more impressive, than any I ever beheld. Perhaps, too, for you, it is better, that your lover should be no longer in the first flush of youth. Your nature seems to require something to venerate, as well as to love. And I have ever observed at prayers, that you seem more especially rapt and carried beyond yourself, in those passages which call peculiarly for worship and adoration."

"Yes, dearest," said Madeline fervently, "I own that Eugene is of all beings, not only of all whom I ever knew, but of whom I ever dreamed, or imagined, the one that I am most fitted to love and to appreciate. His wisdom, but more than that, the lofty tenor of his mind, calls forth all that is highest and best in my own nature. I feel exalted when I listen to him;—and yet, how gentle, with all that nobleness! And to think that *he* should descend to love me, and *so* to love me. It is as if a star were to leave its sphere!"

"Hark! one o'clock," said Ellinor, as the deep

voice of the clock told the first hour of morning.
“Heavens! how much louder the winds rave.
And how the heavy sleet drives against the window!
Our poor watch without! but you may
be sure my uncle was right, and they are safe at
home by this time; nor is it likely, I should
think, that even robbers would be abroad in such
weather!”

“I have heard,” said Madeline, “that robbers
generally choose these dark, stormy nights for
their designs, but I confess I don’t feel much
alarm, and *he* is in the house. Draw nearer to
the fire, Ellinor; is it not pleasant to see how
serenely it burns, while the storm howls without!
it is like my Eugene’s soul, luminous, and lone,
amidst the roar and darkness of this unquiet
world!”

“There spoke himself,” said Ellinor smiling to
perceive how invariably women, who love, imitate
the tone of the beloved one. And Madeline felt
it, and smiled too.

“Hist!” said Ellinor abruptly, “did you not

hear a low, grating noise below? Ah! the winds now prevent your catching the sound; but hush, hush!—now the wind pauses,—there it is again!"

"Yes, I hear it," said Madeline, turning pale, "it seems in the little parlour; a continued, harsh, but very low, noise. Good heavens! it seems at the window below."

"It is like a file," whispered Ellinor: "perhaps—"

"You are right," said Madeline, suddenly rising, "it is a file, and at the bars my father had fixed against the window yesterday. Let us go down, and alarm the house."

"No, no; for God's sake, don't be so rash," cried Ellinor, losing all presence of mind: "hark! the sound ceases, there is a louder noise below, —and steps. Let us lock the door."

But Madeline was of that fine and high order of spirit which rises in proportion to danger, and calming her sister as well as she could, till she found her attempts wholly ineffectual, she seized the light with a steady hand, opened the door,

and Ellinor still clinging to her, passed the landing-place, and hastened to her father's room ; he slept at the opposite corner of the staircase. Aram's chamber was at the extreme end of the house. Before she reached the door of Lester's apartment, the noise below grew loud and distinct—a scuffle—voices—curses—and now—the sound of a pistol ! —in a moment more the whole house was stirring. Lester in his night robe, his broadsword in his hand, and his long grey hair floating behind, was the first to appear ; the servants, old and young, male and female, now came thronging simultaneously round ; and in a general body, Lester several paces at their head, his daughters following next to him, they rushed to the apartment whence the noise, now suddenly stilled, had proceeded.

The window was opened, evidently by force ; an instrument like a wedge was fixed in the bureau containing Lester's money, and seemed to have been left there, as if the person using it had been disturbed before the design for which it was introduced had been accomplished, and, (the only

evidence of life,) Aram stood, dressed, in the centre of the room, a pistol in his left hand, a sword in his right; a bludgeon severed in two lay at his feet, and on the floor within two yards of him, towards the window, drops of blood yet warm, showed that the pistol had not been discharged in vain.

“And is it you, my brave friend, that I have to thank for our safety?” cried Lester in great emotion.

“ You, Eugene!” repeated Madeline, sinking on his breast.

“ But thanks hereafter,” continued Lester ; “ let us now to the pursuit,—perhaps the villain may have perished beneath your bullet?”

“ Ha!” muttered Aram, who had hitherto seemed unconscious of all around him; so fixed had been his eye, so colourless his cheek, so motionless his posture. “ Ha! say you so?—think you I have slain him?—no, it cannot be—the ball did not slay, I saw him stagger; but he rallied—not so one who receives a mortal wound!—ha! ha!—there is blood, you say, that is true; but

what then!—it is not the first wound that kills, you must strike again—pooh, pooh, what is a little blood!"

While he was thus muttering, Lester and the more active of the servants had already sallied through the window, but the night was so intensely dark that they could not penetrate a step beyond them. Lester returned, therefore, in a few moments; and met Aram's dark eye fixed upon him with an unutterable expression of anxiety.

"You have *found* no one," said he, "no dying man?—Ha!—well—well—well! they must *both* have escaped; the night must favour them."

"Do you fancy the villain was severely wounded?"

"Not so—I trust not so; he seemed able to—But stop—oh God!—stop!—your foot is dabbling in blood—blood shed by *me*,—off! off!"

Lester moved aside with a quick abhorrence, as he saw that his feet were indeed smearing the blood over the polished and slippery surface of the oak boards, and in moving he stumbled against a

dark lantern in which the light still burnt, and which the robbers in their flight had left.

"Yes," said Aram observing it. "It was by that—their own light that I saw them—saw their faces—and—and—(bursting into a loud, wild laugh) they were *both* strangers!"

"Ah, I thought so, I knew so," said Lester plucking the instrument from the bureau. "I knew they could be no Grassdale men. What, did you fancy, they could be? But—bless me, Madeline—what ho! help!—Aram, she has fainted at your feet."

And it was indeed true and remarkable, that so utter had been the absorption of Aram's mind, that he had been insensible not only to the entrance of Madeline, but even that she had thrown herself on his breast. And she, overcome by her feelings, had slid to the ground from that momentary resting-place, in a swoon which Lester, in the general tumult and confusion, was now the first to perceive.

At this exclamation, at the sound of Madeline's

name, the blood rushed back from Aram's heart, where it had gathered, icy and curdling; and, awakened thoroughly and at once to himself, he knelt down, and weaving his arms around her, supported her head on his breast, and called upon her with the most passionate and moving exclamations.

But when the faint bloom retinged her cheek, and her lips stirred, he printed a long kiss on that cheek—on those lips, and surrendered his post to Ellinor; who, blushingly gathering the robe over the beautiful breast from which it had been slightly drawn; now entreated all, save the women of the house, to withdraw till her sister was restored.

Lester, eager to hear what his guest could relate, therefore took Aram to his own apartment, where the particulars were briefly told.

Suspecting, which indeed was the chief reason that excused him to himself in yielding to Madeline's request, that the men Lester and himself had encountered in their evening walk, might be other

than they seemed, and that they might have well overheard Lester's communication, as to the sum in his house, and the place where it was stored ; he had not undressed himself, but kept the door of his room open to listen if any thing stirred. The keen sense of hearing, which we have before remarked him to possess, enabled him to catch the sound of the file at the bars, even before Ellinor, notwithstanding the distance of his own chamber from the place, and seizing the sword which had been left in his room, (the pistol was his own) he had descended to the room below.

“ What !” said Lester, “ and without a light ?”

“ The darkness is familiar to me,” said Aram. “ I could walk by the edge of a precipice in the darkest night without one false step, if I had but once passed it before. I did not gain the room, however, till the window had been forced ; and by the light of a dark lantern which one of them held, I perceived two men standing by the bureau—the rest you can imagine ; my victory was easy, for the bludgeon, with which one of them

aimed at me, gave way at once to the edge of your good sword, and my pistol delivered me of the other.—There ends the history.”

Lester overwhelmed him with thanks and praises, but Aram, glad to escape them, hurried away to see after Madeline, whom he now met on the landing-place, leaning on Ellinor’s arm and still pale.

She gave him her hand, which he for one moment pressed passionately to his lips, but dropped, the next, with an altered and chilled air. And hastily observing he would not now detain her from a rest which she must so much require, he turned away and descended the stairs. Some of the servants were grouped around the place of encounter ; he entered the room, and again started at the sight of the blood.

“ Bring water,” said he fiercely : “ will you let the stagnant gore ooze and rot into the boards, to startle the eye, and still the heart with its filthy, and unutterable stain—water, I say ! water !”

They hurried to obey him, and Lester coming

into the room to see the window reclosed by the help of boards &c., found the Student bending over the servants as they performed their reluctant task, and rating them with a raised and harsh voice for the hastiness with which he accused them of seeking to slur it over.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARAM ALONE AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—HIS SOLILOQUY AND PROJECT.—SCENE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MADELINE.

“—Luce non grata fruor
Trepidante semper corde, *non* mortis metu
Sed —————

SENEC. OCTAVIA, Act I.

THE two men servants of the house remained up the rest of the night; but it was not till the morning had progressed far beyond the usual time of rising in the fresh shades of Grassdale, that Madeline and Ellinor became visible; even Lester left his bed an hour later than his wont; and knocking at Aram's door, found the Student was already abroad, while it was evident that his bed had not been pressed

during the whole of the night. Lester descended into the garden, and was there met by Peter Dealtry, and a detachment of the band ; who, as common sense and Lester had predicted, were indeed, at a very early period of the watch, driven to their respective homes. They were now seriously concerned for their unmanliness, which they passed off as well as they could upon their conviction "that nobody at Grassdale could ever really be robbed;" and promised with sincere contrition, that they would be most excellent guards for the future. Peter was, in sooth, singularly chop-fallen ; and could only defend himself by an incoherent mutter, from which the Squire turned somewhat impatiently, when he heard, louder than the rest, the words "seventy-seventh psalm, seventeenth verse,

"The clouds that were both thick and black,
Did rain full plenteously."

Leaving the Squire to the edification of the pious host, let us follow the steps of Aram, who at the early dawn had quitted his sleepless cham-

ber, and, though the clouds at that time still poured down in a dull and heavy sleet, wandered away, whither he neither knew, nor heeded. He was now hurrying, with unabated speed, though with no purposed bourne or object, over the chain of mountains that backed the green and lovely valleys, among which his home was cast.

“ Yes !” said he, at last halting abruptly, with a desperate resolution stamped on his countenance, “ yes ! I will so determine. If, after this interview, I feel that I cannot command and bind Houseman’s perpetual secrecy, I will surrender Madeline at once. She has loved me generously and trustingly. I will not link her life with one that may be called hence in any hour, and to so dread an account. Neither shall the grey hairs of Lester be brought with the sorrow of my shame, to a dishonoured and untimely grave. And after the outrage of last night, the daring outrage, how can I calculate on the safety of a day ? though Houseman was not present, though I can scarce believe that he *knew* or at least abetted the attack ; yet they

were assuredly of his gang : had one been seized, the clue might have traced to his detection—and *he* detected, what should I have to dread ! No, Madeline ! no ; not while this sword hangs over me, will I subject *thee* to share the horror of my fate !”

This resolution, which was certainly generous, and yet no more than honest, Aram had no sooner arrived at, than he dismissed, at once, by one of those efforts which powerful minds can command, all the weak and vacillating thoughts that might interfere with the sternness of his determination. He seemed to breathe more freely, and the haggard wan ness of his brow, relaxed at least from the workings that, but the moment before, distorted its wonted serenity, with a maniac wild ness.

He pursued his desultory way now with a calmer step.

“ What a night !” said he, again breaking into the low murmur in which he was accustomed to hold commune with himself. “ Had Houseman

been one of the ruffians ! a shot might have freed me, and without a crime, for ever ! And till the light flashed on their brows, I thought the smaller man bore his aspect. Ha, out, tempting thought ! out on thee !" he cried aloud, and stamping with his foot, then recalled by his own vehemence, he cast a jealous and hurried glance round him, though at that moment his step was on the very height of the mountains, where not even the solitary shepherd, save in search of some more daring straggler of the flock, ever brushed the dew from the cragged, yet fragrant soil. " Yet," he said, in a lower voice, and again sinking into the sombre depths of his reverie, " it is a tempting, a wondrously tempting thought. And it struck athwart me, like a flash of lightning when this hand was at his throat—a tighter strain, another moment, and Eugene Aram had not had an enemy, a witness against him left in the world. Ha ! are the dead no foes then ? Are the dead no witnesses ?" Here he relapsed into utter silence, but his gestures continued wild, and his eyes

wandered round, with a bloodshot and unquiet glare. "Enough," at length he said calmly ; and with the manner of one '*who has rolled a stone from his heart* ;'* "enough ! I will not so sully myself; unless all other hope of self-preservation be extinct. And why despond ? the plan I have thought of seems well-laid, wise, consummate at all points. Let me consider— forfeited the moment he enters England—not given till he has left it—paid periodically, and of such extent as to supply his wants, preserve him from crime, and forbid the possibility of extorting more : all this sounds well ; and if not feasible at last, why farewell Madeline, and I myself leave this land for ever. Come what will to me— death in its vilest shape—let not the stroke fall on that breast. And if it be," he continued, his face lighting up, "if it be, as it may yet, that I can chain this hell-hound, why, even then, the instant that Madeline is mine, I will fly these scenes ; I will seek a yet obscurer and remoter

* Eastern saying.

corner of earth.: I will choose another name—
Fool! why did I not so before? But matters
it? What is writ is writ. Who can struggle
with the invisible and giant hand, that launched
the world itself into motion; and at whose pre-
decreed we hold the dark boon of life and death?"

It was not till evening that Aram, utterly
worn out and exhausted, found himself in the
neighbourhood of Lester's house. The sun had
only broken forth at its setting; and it now
glittered from its western pyre over the drip-
ping hedges, and spread a brief, but magic glow
along the rich landscape around; the chang-
ing woods clad in the thousand dies of Autumn;
the scattered and peaceful cottages, with their
long wreaths of smoke curling upward, and the
grey and venerable walls of the Manor-house,
with the Church hard by, and the delicate spire,
which, mixing itself with heaven, is at once
the most touching and solemn emblem of the
Faith to which it is devoted. It was a sabbath
eve; and from the spot on which Aram stood, he

might discern many a rustic train trooping slowly up the green village lane towards the Church ; and the deep bell which summoned to the last service of the day now swung its voice far over the sunlit and tranquil scene.

But it was not the setting sun, nor the autumnal landscape, nor the voice of the holy bell that now arrested the step of Aram. At a little distance before him, leaning over a gate, and seemingly waiting till the ceasing of the bell should announce the time to enter the sacred mansion, he beheld the figure of Madeline Lester. Her head, at the moment, was averted from him, as if she were looking after Ellinor and her uncle, who were in the churchyard among a little group of their homely neighbours ; and he was half in doubt whether to shun her presence, when she suddenly turned round, and seeing him, uttered an exclamation of joy. It was now too late for avoidance ; and calling to his aid that mastery over his features, which, in ordinary times, few more eminently possessed, he approached his

beautiful mistress with a smile as serene, if not as glowing, as her own. But she had already opened the gate, and bounding forward, met him half way.

“ Ah, truant, truant,” said she, “ the whole day absent, without inquiry or farewell ! After this, when shall I believe that thou really lovest me ? ”

“ But,” continued Madeline, gazing on his countenance, which bore witness, in its present languor, to the fierce emotions which had lately raged within, “ but, heavens ! dearest, how pale you look ; you are fatigued ; give me your hand, Eugene,—it is parched and dry. Come into the house ;—you must need rest and refreshment.”

“ I am better here, my Madeline,—the air and the sun revive me : let us rest by the stile yonder. But you were going to Church ? and the bell has ceased.”

“ I could attend, I fear, little to the prayers now,” said Madeline, “ unless you feel well enough and will come to Church with me.”

“ To Church ! ” said Aram, with a half shudder, “ no ; my thoughts are in no mood for prayer.”

"Then you shall give your thoughts to me and I, in return, will pray for you before I rest."

And so saying, Madeline, with her usual innocent frankness of manner, wound her arm in his, and they walked onward towards the stile Aram had pointed out. It was a little rustic stile, with chesnut-trees hanging over it on either side. It stands to this day, and I have pleased myself with finding Walter Lester's initials, and Madeline's also, with the date of the year, carved in half-worn letters on the wood, probably by the hand of the former.

They now rested at this spot. All around them was still and solitary; the groups of peasants had entered the Church, and nothing of life, save the cattle grazing in the distant fields, or the thrush starting from the wet bushes, was visible. The winds were lulled to rest, and, though somewhat of the chill of autumn floated on the air, it only bore a balm to the harassed brow and fevered veins of the Student; and Madeline!—she felt nothing but his presence. It was exactly what

we picture to ourselves of a sabbath eve, unutterably serene and soft, and borrowing from the very melancholy of the declining year an impressive, yet a mild solemnity.

There are seasons, often in the most dark or turbulent periods of our life, when, why we know not, we are suddenly called from ourselves, by the remembrances of early childhood : something touches the electric chain, and, lo ! a host of shadowy and sweet recollections steal upon us. The wheel rests, the oar is suspended, we are snatched from the labour and travail of present life ; we are born again, and live anew. As the secret page in which the characters once written seem for ever effaced, but which, if breathed upon, gives them again into view ; so the memory can revive the images invisible for years : but while we gaze, the breath recedes from the surface, and all one moment so vivid, with the next moment has become once more a blank !

“ It is singular,” said Aram, “ but often as I have paused at this spot, and gazed upon this

landscape, a likeness to the scenes of my childish life, which it now seems to me to present, never occurred to me before. Yes, yonder, in that cottage, with the sycamores in front, and the orchard extending behind, till its boundary, as we now stand, seems lost among the woodland, I could fancy that I looked upon my father's home. The clump of trees that lies yonder to the right could cheat me readily to the belief that I saw the little grove in which, enamoured with the first passion of study, I was wont to pore over the thrice-read book through the long summer days ; — a boy, — a thoughtful boy ; yet, oh ! how happy ! What worlds appeared then to me, to open in every page ! how exhaustless I thought the treasures and the hopes of life ! and beautiful on the mountain tops seemed to me the steps of Knowledge ! I did not dream of all that the musing and lonely passion that I nursed was to entail upon me. There, in the clefts of the valley, or the ridges of the hill, or the fragrant course of the stream, I began already to win its history from the herb or flower ;

I saw nothing, that I did not long to unravel its secrets ; all that the earth nourished ministered to one desire :—and what of low or sordid did there mingle with that desire ? The petty avarice, the mean ambition, the debasing love, even the heat, the anger, the fickleness, the caprice of other men, did they allure or bow down my nature from its steep and solitary eyrie ? I lived but to feed my mind ; wisdom was my thirst, my dream, my aliment, my sole fount and sustenance of life. And have I not sown the whirlwind and reaped the wind ? The glory of my youth is gone, my veins are chilled, my frame is bowed, my heart is gnawed with cares, my nerves are unstrung as a loosened bow : and what, after all, is my gain ? Oh, God ! what is my gain ?”

“ Eugene, dear, dear Eugene !” murmured Madeline soothingly, and wrestling with her tears, “ is not your gain great ? is it no triumph that you stand, while yet young, almost alone in the world, for success in all that you have attempted ? ”

“ And what,” exclaimed Aram, breaking in

upon her, “what is this world which we ransack, but a stupendous charnel-house? Every thing that we deem most lovely, ask its origin? —Decay! When we rifle nature, and collect wisdom; are we not like the hags of old, culling simples from the rank grave, and extracting sorceries from the rotting bones of the dead? Every thing around us is fathered by corruption, battened by corruption, and into corruption returns at last. Corruption is at once the womb and grave of Nature, and the very beauty on which we gaze and hang,—the cloud, and the tree, and the swarming waters,—all are one vast panorama of death! But it did not always seem to me thus; and even now I speak with a heated pulse and a dizzy brain. Come, Madeline, let us change the theme.”

And dismissing at once from his language, and perhaps, as he proceeded, also from his mind, all of its former gloom, except such as might shade, but not embitter, the natural tenderness of remembrance, Aram now related, with that vivid-

ness of diction, which, though we feel we can very inadequately convey its effect, characterised his conversation, and gave something of poetic interest to all he uttered; those reminiscences which belong to childhood, and which all of us take delight to hear from the lips of any one we love.

It was while on this theme that the lights which the deepening twilight had now made necessary, became visible in the Church, streaming afar through its large oriel window, and brightening the dark firs that overshadowed the graves around: and just at that moment the organ, (a gift from a rich rector, and the boast of the neighbouring country,) stole upon the silence with its swelling and solemn note. There was something in the strain of this sudden music that was so kindred with the holy repose of the scene, and which chimed so exactly to the chord that now vibrated in Aram's mind, that it struck upon him at once with an irresistible power. He paused abruptly "as if an angel spoke!" that sound so peculiarly

adapted to express sacred and unearthly emotion none who have ever mourned or sinned can hear, at an unlooked for moment, without a certain sentiment, that either subdues, or elevates, or awes. But he,—he was a boy once more!—he was again in the village church of his native place: his father, with his silver hair, stood again beside him! there was his mother, pointing to him the holy verse; there the half arch, half reverent face of his little sister, (she died young!)—there the upward eye and hushed countenance of the preacher who had first raised his mind to knowledge, and supplied its food,—all, all lived, moved, breathed, again before him,—all, as when he was young and guiltless, and at peace; hope and the future one word!

He bowed his head lower and lower; the hardness and hypocrisies of pride, the sense of danger and of horror, that, in agitating, still supported, the mind of this resolute and scheming man, at once forsook him. Madeline felt his tears drop fast and burning on her hand, and the next mo-

ment, overcome by the relief it afforded to a heart preyed upon by fiery and dread secrets, which it could not reveal, and a frame exhausted by the long and extreme tension of all its powers, he laid his head upon that faithful bosom, and wept aloud.

CHAPTER XV.

ARAM'S SECRET EXPEDITION.—A SCENE WORTHY THE ACTORS.—ARAM'S ADDRESS AND POWERS OF PERSUASION OR HYPOCRISY.—THEIR RESULT.—A FEARFUL NIGHT.—ARAM'S SOLITARY RIDE HOMEWARD.—WHOM HE MEETS BY THE WAY, AND WHAT HE SEES.

Macbeth.—Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead.
* * * * *

Donalbain.—Our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer.
* * * * *

Old Man.—Hours dreadful and things strange.

MACBETH.

“AND you must really go to * * * * *, to pay your importunate creditor this very evening. Sunday is a bad day for such matters; but as you pay him by an order, it does not much signify; and I can well understand your impatience to feel discharged of the debt. But it is already late; and if it must be so, you had better start.”

“True,” said Aram to the above remark of

Lester's, as the two stood together without the door ; "but do you feel quite secure and guarded against any renewed attack ?"

" Why, unless they bring a regiment, yes ! I have put a body of our patrols on a service where they can scarce be inefficient, viz. I have stationed them in the house, instead of without ; and I shall myself bear them company through the greater part of the night : to-morrow I shall remove all that I possess of value to * * * * (the county town) including those unlucky guineas, which you will not ease me of."

" The order you have kindly given me will amply satisfy my purpose," answered Aram : " And so, there has been no clue to these robberies discovered throughout the day ?"

" None : to-morrow, the magistrates are to meet at * * * *, and concert measures : it is absolutely impossible, but that we should detect the villains in a few days, viz. if they remain in these parts. I hope to heaven you will not meet them this evening."

" I shall go well armed," answered Aram,

“ and the horse you lend me is fleet and strong. And now farewell for the present; I shall probably not return to Grassdale this night, or if I do, it will be at so late an hour, that I shall seek my own domicile without disturbing you.”

“ No, no ; you had better remain in the town, and not return till morning,” said the Squire ; “ and now let us come to the stables.”

To obviate all chance of suspicion as to the real place of his destination, Aram deliberately rode to the town he had mentioned, as the one in which his pretended creditor expected him. He put up at an inn, walked forth as if to visit some one in the town, returned, remounted, and by a circuitous route, came into the neighbourhood of the place in which he was to meet Houseman : then turning into a long and dense chain of wood, he fastened his horse to a tree, and looking to the priming of his pistols, which he carried under his riding-cloak, proceeded to the spot on foot.

The night was still, and not wholly dark ; for

the clouds lay scattered though dense, and suffered many stars to gleam through the heavy air; the moon herself was abroad, but on her decline, and looked forth with a wan and saddened aspect, as she travelled from cloud to cloud. It has been the necessary course of our narrative, to pourtray Aram, more often than to give an exact notion of his character we could have altogether wished, in his weaker moments; but whenever he stood in the actual presence of danger, his whole soul was in arms to cope with it worthily: courage, sagacity, even cunning, all awakened to the encounter; and the mind which his life had so austerey cultivated repaid him in the urgent season, with its acute address, and unswerving hardihood. The Devil's Crag, as it was popularly called, was a spot consecrated by many a wild tradition, which would not, perhaps, be wholly out of character with the dark thread of this tale, were we in accordance with certain of our brethren, who seem to think a novel like

a bundle of wood, the more faggots it contains the greater its value, allowed by the rapidity of our narrative to relate them.

The same stream which lent so soft an attraction to the valleys of Grassdale, here assumed a different character; broad, black, and rushing, it whirled along a course, overhung by shagged and abrupt banks. On the opposite side to that by which Aram now pursued his path, an almost perpendicular mountain was covered with gigantic pine and fir, that might have reminded a German wanderer of the darkest recesses of the Hartz; and seemed, indeed, no unworthy haunt for the weird huntsman, or the forest fiend. Over this wood the moon now shimmered, with the pale and feeble light we have already described; and only threw into a more sombre shade the motionless and gloomy foliage. Of all the offspring of the forest, the Fir bears, perhaps, the most saddening and desolate aspect. Its long branches, without absolute leaf or blossom; its dead, dark, eternal hue, which the winter seems to wither

not, nor the spring to revive, have, I know not what of a mystic and unnatural life. Around all woodland, there is that *horror umbrarum* which becomes more remarkably solemn and awing amidst the silence and depth of night: but this is yet more especially the characteristic of that sullen evergreen. Perhaps, too, this effect is increased by the sterile and dreary soil, on which, when in groves, it is generally found; and its very hardiness, the very pertinacity with which it draws its strange unfluctuating life, from the sternest wastes and most reluctant strata, enhance, unconsciously, the unwelcome effect it is calculated to create upon the mind. At this place, too, the waters that dashed beneath gave yet additional wildness to the rank verdure of the wood, and contributed, by their rushing darkness partially broken by the stars, and the hoarse roar of their chafed course, a yet more grim and savage sublimity to the scene.

Winding a narrow path, (for the whole country was as familiar as a garden to his footstep)

that led through the tall wet herbage, almost along the perilous brink of the stream, Aram was now aware, by the increased and deafening sound of the waters, that the appointed spot was nearly gained; and presently the glimmering and imperfect light of the skies, revealed the dim shape of a gigantic rock, that rose abruptly from the middle of the stream; and which, rude, barren, vast, as it really was, seemed now, by the uncertainty of night, like some monstrous and deformed creature of the waters, suddenly emerging from their vexed and dreary depths. This was the far-famed Crag, which had borrowed from tradition its evil and ominous name. And now, the stream, bending round with a broad and sudden swoop, showed at a little distance, ghostly and indistinct through the darkness, the mighty Waterfall, whose roar had been his guide. Only in one streak a-down the giant cataract, the stars were reflected; and this long train of broken light glittered preternaturally forth through the rugged crags and the sombre verdure, that wrapped

either side of the waterfall in utter and rayless gloom.

Nothing could exceed the forlorn and terrific grandeur of the spot; the roar of the waters supplied to the ear what the night forbade to the eye. Incessant and eternal they thundered down into the gulf; and then shooting over that fearful basin, and forming another, but a mimic fall, dashed on, till they were opposed by the sullen and abrupt crag below; and besieging its base with a renewed roar, sent their foamy and angry spray half way up the hoar ascent.

At this stern and dreary spot, well suited for such conferences as Aram and Houseman alone could hold; and which, whatever was the original secret that linked the two men thus strangely, seemed of necessity to partake of a desperate and lawless character, with danger for its main topic, and death itself for its colouring, Aram now paused, and with an eye accustomed to the darkness, looked around for his companion.

He did not wait long: from the profound

shadow that girded the space immediately around the fall, Houseman now emerged and joined the Student. The stunning noise of the cataract in the place where they met, forbade any attempt to converse ; and they walked on by the course of the stream, to gain a spot less in reach of the deafening shout of the mountain giant as he rushed with his banded waters, upon the valley like a foe.

It was noticeable that as they proceeded, Aram walked on with an unsuspecting and careless demeanour ; but Houseman pointing out the way with his hand, not leading it, kept a little behind Aram, and watched his motions with a vigilant and wary eye. The Student, who had diverged from the path at Houseman's direction, now paused at a place where the matted bushes seemed to forbid any farther progress ; and said, for the first time breaking the silence, “ We cannot proceed ; shall this be the place of our conference ? ”

“ No,” said Houseman, “ we had better pierce the bushes. I know the way, but will not lead it.”

“ And wherefore ?”

“ The mark of your gripe is still on my throat,” replied Houseman, significantly ; “ you know as well as I, that it is not always safe to have a friend lagging behind.”

“ Let us rest here, then,” said Aram, calmly, the darkness veiling any alteration of his countenance, which his comrade’s suspicion might have created.

“ Yet it were much better,” said Houseman, doubtingly, “ could we gain the cave below.”

“ The cave !” said Aram, starting, as if the word had a sound of fear.

“ Ay, ay : but not St. Robert’s,” said Houseman ; and the grin of his teeth was visible through the dullness of the shade. “ But come, give me your hand, and I will venture to conduct you through the thicket :—that is your left hand,” observed Houseman with a sharp and angry suspicion in his tone ; “ give me the right.”

“ As you will,” said Aram in a subdued, yet

meaning voice, that seemed to come from his heart ; and thrilled, for an instant, to the bones of him who heard it ; “ as you will ; but for fourteen years I have not given this right hand, in pledge of fellowship, to living man ; you alone deserve the courtesy—there !”

Houseman hesitated, before he took the hand now extended to him.

“ Pshaw !” said he, as if indignant at himself, “ what ! scruples at a shadow ! Come,” (grasping the hand) “ that’s well—so, so ; now we are in the thicket—tread firm—this way—hold,” continued Houseman, under his breath, as suspicion anew seemed to cross him ; “ hold ! we can see each other’s face not even dimly now : but in this hand, *my* right is free, I have a knife that has done good service ere this ; and if I feel cause to suspect that you meditate to play me false, I bury it in your heart ; do you heed me ?”

“ Fool !” said Aram, scornfully, “ I should dread you dead yet more than living.”

Houseman made no answer; but continued to grope on through the path in the thicket, which he evidently knew well; though even in daylight, so thick were the trees, and so artfully had their boughs been left to cover the track, no path could have been discovered by one unacquainted with the clue.

They had now walked on for some minutes, and of late their steps had been threading a rugged, and somewhat precipitous descent: all this while, the pulse of the hand Houseman held, beat with as steadfast and calm a throb, as in the most quiet mood of learned meditation; although Aram could not but be conscious that a mere accident, a slip of the foot, an entanglement in the briars, might awaken the irritable fears of his ruffian comrade, and bring the knife to his breast. But this was not that form of death that could shake the nerves of Aram; nor, though arming his whole soul to ward off one danger, was he well sensible of another, that might have seemed

equally near and probable, to a less collected and energetic nature. Houseman now halted, again put aside the boughs, proceeded a few steps, and by a certain dampness and oppression in the air, Aram rightly conjectured himself in the cavern Houseman had spoken of.

"We are landed now," said Houseman, "but wait, I will strike a light; I do not love darkness, even with another sort of companion than the one I have now the honour to entertain!"

In a few moments a light was produced, and placed aloft on a crag in the cavern; but the ray it gave was feeble and dull, and left all beyond the immediate spot in which they stood, in a darkness little less Cimmerian than before.

"'Fore Gad, it is cold," said Houseman shivering, "but I have taken care, you see, to provide for a friend's comfort;" so saying, he approached a bundle of dry sticks and leaves, piled at one corner of the cave, applied the light to the fuel, and presently, the fire rose crackling, breaking into a thousand sparks, and freeing itself gra-

dually from the clouds of smoke in which it was enveloped. It now mounted into a ruddy and cheering flame, and the warm glow played picturesquely upon the grey sides of the cavern, which was of a rugged shape, and small dimensions, and cast its reddening light over the forms of the two men.

Houseman stood close to the flame, spreading his hands over it, and a sort of grim complacency stealing along features singularly ill-favoured, and sinister in their expression, as he felt the animal luxury of the warmth.

Across his middle was a broad leathern belt, containing a brace of large horse pistols, and the knife, or rather dagger, with which he had menaced Aram, an instrument sharpened on both sides, and nearly a foot in length. Altogether, what with his muscular breadth of figure, his hard and rugged features, his weapons, and a certain reckless, bravo air which indescribably marked his attitude and bearing, it was not well possible to imagine a fitter habitant for that grim

cave, or one from whom men of peace, like Eugene Aram, might have seemed to derive more reasonable cause of alarm.

The Scholar stood at a little distance, waiting till his companion was entirely prepared for the conference, and his pale and lofty features, hushed in their usual deep, but at such a moment, almost preternatural repose. He stood leaning with folded arms against the rude wall; the light reflected upon his dark garments, with the graceful riding-cloak of the day half falling from his shoulder, and revealing also the pistols in his belt, and the sword, which, though commonly worn at that time, by all pretending to superiority above the lower and trading orders, Aram usually waived as a distinction, but now carried as a defence. And nothing could be more striking, than the contrast between the ruffian form of his companion, and the delicate and chiselled beauty of the Student's features, with their air of mournful intelligence and serene command, and the slender, though nervous symmetry of his frame.

"Houseman," said Aram, now advancing, as his comrade turned his face from the flame, towards him; "before we enter on the main subject of our proposed commune—tell me, were you engaged on the attempt last night upon Lester's house?"

"By the Fiend, no!" answered Houseman, "nor did I learn it till this morning; it was unpremeditated till within a few hours of the time, by the two fools who alone planned it. The fact is, that myself and the greater part of our little band, were engaged some miles off, in the western part of the county. Two—our general—spies, had been, of their own accord, into your neighbourhood, to reconnoitre. They marked Lester's house during the day, and gathered, (as I can say by experience it was easy to do) from unsuspected inquiry in the village, for they wore a clown's dress, several particulars which induced them to think it contained what might repay the trouble of breaking into it. And walking along the fields, they overheard the good master of the house tell one

of his neighbours of a large sum at home; nay, even describe the place where it was kept: that determined them;—they feared, (as the old man indeed observed,) that the sum might be removed the next day; they had noted the house sufficiently to profit by the description given: they resolved, then, of themselves, for it was too late to reckon on our assistance, to break into the room in which the money was kept—though from the aroused vigilance of the frightened hamlet and the force within the house, they resolved to attempt no farther booty. They reckoned on the violence of the storm, and the darkness of the night to prevent their being heard or seen; they were mistaken—the house was alarmed, they were no sooner in the luckless room, than—

“ Well, I know the rest; was the one wounded dangerously hurt?”

“ Oh, he will recover, he will recover; our men are no chickens. But I own I thought it natural that you might suspect me of sharing in the attack; and though, as I have said before, I do not love

you, I have no wish to embroil matters so far as an outrage on the house of your father-in-law, might be reasonably expected to do:— at all events, while the gate to an amicable compromise between us is still open.”

“I am satisfied on this head,” said Aram, “and I can now treat with you in a spirit of less distrustful precaution than before. I tell you, Houseman, that the terms are no longer at your control; you must leave this part of the country, and that forthwith, or you inevitably perish. The whole population is alarmed, and the most vigilant of the London Police have been already sent for. Life is sweet to you, as to us all, and I cannot imagine you so mad, as to incur not the risk, but the certainty, of losing it. You can no longer therefore, hold the threat of your presence over my head. Besides, were you able to do so, I at least have the power, which you seem to have forgotten, of freeing myself from it. Am I chained to yonder valleys? have I not the facility of quitting them at any moment I will?

of seeking a hiding-place, which might baffle, not only your vigilance to discover me, but that of the Law? True, my approaching marriage puts some clog upon my wing, but you know that I, of all men, am not likely to be the slave of passion. And what ties are strong enough to arrest the steps of him who flies from a fearful death? Am I using sophistry here, Houseman? Have I not reason on my side?"

"What you say is true enough," said Houseman reluctantly; "I do not gainsay it. But I know you have not sought me, in this spot, and at this hour, for the purpose of denying my claims: the desire of compromise alone can have brought you hither."

"You speak well," said Aram, preserving the admirable coolness of his manner; and continuing the deep and sagacious hypocrisy by which he sought to baffle the dogged covetousness and keen sense of interest with which he had to contend. "It is not easy for either of us to deceive the other. We are men, whose perceptions a life of

danger, has sharpened upon all points ; I speak to you frankly, for disguise is unavailing. Though I can fly from your reach—though I can desert my present home and my intended bride, I would fain think I have free and secure choice to preserve that exact path and scene of life which I have chalked out for myself : I would fain be rid of all apprehension from you. There are two ways only by which this security can be won : the first is through your death ;—nay, start not, nor put your hand on your pistol ; you have not now cause to fear me. Had I chosen that method of escape, I could have effected it long since : When, months ago, you slept under my roof—ay, *slept*—what should have hindered me from stabbing you during the slumber ? Two nights since, when my blood was up, and the fury upon me, what should have prevented me tightening the grasp that you so resent, and laying you breathless at my feet ? Nay, now, though you keep your eye fixed on my motions, and your hand upon your weapon, you would be no match

for a desperate and resolved man, who might as well perish in conflict with you, as by the protracted accomplishment of your threats. Your ball *might* fail—(even now I see your hand trembles)—mine, if I so will it, is certain death. No, Houseman, it would be as vain for your eye to scan the dark pool into whose breast yon cataract casts its waters, as for your intellect to pierce the depths of my mind and motives. Your murder, though in self-defence, would lay a weight upon my soul, which would sink it for ever: I should see, in your death, new chances of detection spread themselves before me: the terrors of the dead are not to be bought or awed into silence; I should pass from one peril into another; and the law's dread vengeance might fall upon me, through the last peril, even yet more surely than through the first. Be composed, then, on this point! From my hand, unless you urge it madly upon yourself, you are wholly safe. Let us turn to my second method of attaining security. It lies, not in your momentary cessation from per-

secutions; not in your absence from this spot alone; you must quit the country—you must never return to it—your home must be cast, and your very grave dug in a foreign soil. Are you prepared for this? If not, I can say no more; and I again cast myself passive into the arms of Fate."

" You ask," said Houseman, whose fears were allayed by Aram's address, though, at the same time, his dissolute and desperate nature was subdued and tamed in spite of himself, by the very composure of the loftier mind with which it was brought in contact: " You ask," said he, " no trifling favour of a man—to desert his country for ever; but I am no dreamer, to love one spot better than another. I should, perhaps, prefer a foreign clime, as the safer and the freer from old recollections, if I could live in it as a man who loves the relish of life should do. Show me the advantages I am to gain by exile, and farewell to the pale cliffs of England for ever!"

" Your demand is just," answered Aram;

“ listen, then. I am willing to coin all my poor wealth, save alone the barest pittance wherewith to sustain life; nay, more, I am prepared also to melt down the whole of my possible expectations from others, into the form of an annuity to yourself. But mark, it will be taken out of my hands, so that you can have no power over me to alter the conditions with which it will be saddled. It will be so vested that it shall commence the moment you touch a foreign clime; and wholly and for ever cease the moment you set foot on any part of English ground; or, mark also, at the moment of my death. I shall then know that no farther hope from me can induce you to risk this income; for, as I should have spent my all in attaining it, you cannot even meditate the design of extorting more. I shall know that you will not menace my life; for my death would be the destruction of your fortunes. We shall live thus separate and secure from each other; you will have only cause to hope for my safety; and I shall have no reason to shudder at yours.

Through one channel alone could I then fear ; namely, that in dying, you should enjoy the fruitless vengeance of criminating me. But this chance I must patiently endure : you, if older, are more robust and hardy than myself—your life will probably be longer than mine ; and, even were it otherwise, why should we destroy one another ? At my death-bed I will solemnly swear to respect your secret ; why not on your part, I say not swear, but resolve, to respect mine ? We cannot love one another ; but why hate with a gratuitous and demon vengeance ? No, Houseman, however circumstances may have darkened or steeled your heart, it is touched with humanity yet—you will have owed to me the bread of a secure and easy existence—you will feel that I have stripped myself, even to penury, to purchase the comforts I cheerfully resign to you—you will remember that, instead of the sacrifices enjoined by this alternative, I might have sought only to counteract your threats, by attempting a life that you strove to make a snare and torture to my

own. You will remember this ; and you will not grudge me the austere and gloomy solitude in which I seek to forget, or the one solace with which I, perhaps vainly, endeavour to cheer my passage to a quiet grave. No, Houseman, no ; dislike, hate, menace me as you will, I still feel I shall have no cause to dread the mere wantonness of your revenge."

These words, aided by a tone of voice, and an expression of countenance that gave them perhaps their chief effect, took even the hardened nature of Houseman by surprise ; he was affected by an emotion which he could not have believed it possible the man who till then had galled him by the humbling sense of inferiority, could have created. He extended his hand to Aram.

"By ——," he exclaimed, with an oath which we spare the reader, "you are right ! you have made me as helpless in your hands, as an infant. I accept your offer—if I were to refuse it, I should be driven to the same courses I

now pursue. But look you; I know not what may be the amount of the annuity you can raise. I shall not, however, require more than will satisfy wants, which, if not so scanty as your own, are not at least very extravagant or very refined. As for the rest, if there be any surplus, in God's name keep it for yourself, and rest assured that, so far as I am concerned, you shall be molested no more."

"No, Houseman," said Aram, with a half smile, "you shall have all I first mentioned; that is, all beyond what nature craves, honourably and fully. Man's best resolutions are weak: if you knew I possessed aught to spare, a fancied want, a momentary extravagance might tempt you to demand it. Let us put ourselves beyond the possible reach of temptation. But do not flatter youself by the hope that the income will be magnificent. My own annuity is but trifling, and the half of the dowry I expect from my future father-in-law, is all that I can at present obtain.

The whole of that dowry is insignificant as a sum. But if this does not suffice for you, I must beg or borrow elsewhere."

"This, after all, is a pleasanter way of settling business," said Houseman, "than by threats and anger. And now I will tell you exactly the sum on which, if I could receive it yearly, I could live without looking beyond the pale of the Law for more—on which I could cheerfully renounce England, and commence 'the honest man.' But then, hark you, I must have half settled on my little daughter."

"What! have you a child?" said Aram eagerly, and well pleased to find an additional security for his own safety.

"Ay, a little girl, my only one, in her eighth year; she lives with her grandmother, for she is motherless, and that girl must not be left quite penniless should I be summoned hence before my time. Some twelve years hence—as poor Jane promises to be pretty—she may be married off my

hands, but her childhood must not be left to the chances of beggary or shame."

"Doubtless not, doubtless not. Who shall say now that we ever outlive feeling?" said Aram, "Half the annuity shall be settled upon her, should she survive you; but on the same conditions, ceasing when I die, or the instant of your return to England. And now, name the sum that you deem sufficing."

"Why," said Houseman, counting on his fingers, and muttering "twenty—fifty—wine and the creature cheap abroad—humph! a hundred for living, and half as much for pleasure. Come, Aram, one hundred and fifty guineas per annum, English money, will do for a foreign life—you see I am easily satisfied."

"Be it so," said Aram, "I will engage by one means or another to procure it. For this purpose I shall set out for London to-morrow; I will not lose a moment in seeing the necessary settlement made as we have specified. But meanwhile, you must engage to leave this neighbourhood, and if

possible, cause your comrades to do the same, although you will not hesitate, for the sake of your own safety, immediately to separate from them."

"Now that we are on good terms," replied Houseman, "I will not scruple to oblige you in these particulars. My comrades *intend* to quit the country before to-morrow; nay, half are already gone; by daybreak I myself will be some miles hence, and separated from each of them. Let us meet in London after the business is completed, and there conclude our last interview on earth."

"What will be your address?"

"In Lambeth there is a narrow alley that leads to the water-side, called Peveril Lane. The last house to the right, towards the river, is my usual lodging; a safe resting-place at all times, and for all men."

"There then will I seek you. And now, Houseman, fare-you-well! As you remember your word to me, may life flow smooth for your child."

"Eugene Aram," said Houseman, "there is about you something against which the fiercer devil within me would rise in vain. I have read that the tiger can be awed by the human eye, and you compell me into submission by a spell equally unaccountable. You are a singular man, and it seems to me a riddle, how we could ever have been thus connected; or how—but we will not rip up the past, it is an ugly sight, and the fire is just out. Those stories do not do for the dark. But to return;—were it only for the sake of my child, you might depend upon me now; better too an arrangement of this sort, than if I had a larger sum in hand which I might be tempted to fling away, and in looking for more, run my neck into a halter, and leave poor Jane upon charity. But come, it is almost dark again, and no doubt you wish to be stirring: stay, I will lead you back, and put you on the right track, lest you stumble on my friends."

"Is this cavern one of their haunts?" said Aram.

“ Sometimes : but they sleep the other side of the Devil’s Crag to-night. Nothing like a change of quarters for longevity—eh ?”

“ And they easily spare you.”

“ Yes, if it be only on rare occasions, and on the plea of *family* business. Now then, your hand, as before. Jesu ! how it rains—lightning too—I could look with less fear on a naked sword, than those red, forked, blinding flashes—Hark ! thunder.”

The night had now, indeed, suddenly changed its aspect ; the rain descended in torrents, even more impetuously than on the former night, while the thunder burst over their very heads, as they wound upward through the brake. With every instant, the lightning broke from the riven chasm of the blackness that seemed suspended as in a solid substance above, brightened the whole heaven into one livid and terrific flame, and showed to the two men the faces of each other, rendered deathlike and ghastly by the glare. Houseman was evidently affected by the fear that sometimes

seizes even the sturdiest criminals, when exposed to those more fearful phenomena of the Heavens, which seem to humble into nothing the power and the wrath of man. His teeth chattered, and he muttered broken words about the peril of wandering near trees when the lightning was of that forked character, accelerating his pace at every sentence, and sometimes interrupting himself with an ejaculation, half oath, half prayer, or a congratulation that the rain at least diminished the danger. They soon cleared the thicket, and a few minutes brought them once more to the banks of the stream, and the increased roar of the cataract. No earthly scene perhaps could surpass the appalling sublimity of that which they beheld ;—every instant the lightning, which became more and more frequent, converting the black waters into billows of living fire, or wreathing itself in lurid spires around the huge crag that now rose in sight ; and again, as the thunder rolled onward, darting its vain fury upon the rushing cataract, and the tortured breast of the gulf that raved be-

low. And the sounds that filled the air were even more fraught with terror and menace than the scene ;—the waving, the groans, the crash of the pines on the hill, the impetuous force of the rain upon the whirling river, and the everlasting roar of the cataract, answered anon by the yet more awful voice that burst above it from the clouds.

They halted while yet sufficiently distant from the cataract to be heard by each other. “ My path,” said Aram, as the lightning now paused upon the scene, and seemed literally to wrap in a lurid shroud the dark figure of the Student, as he stood, with his hand calmly raised, and his cheek pale, but dauntless and composed ; “ My path now lies yonder : in a week we shall meet again.”

“ By the fiend,” said Houseman, shuddering, “ I would not, for a full hundred, ride alone through the moor you will pass. There stands a gibbet by the road, on which a paricide was hanged in chains. Pray Heaven this night be no omen of the success of our present compact !”

"A steady heart, Houseman," answered Aram, striking into the separate path, "is its own omen."

The Student soon gained the spot in which he had left his horse; the animal had not attempted to break the bridle, but stood trembling from limb to limb, and testified by a quick short neigh the satisfaction with which it hailed the approach of its master, and found itself no longer alone.

Aram remounted, and hastened once more into the main road. He scarcely felt the rain, though the fierce wind drove it right against his path; he scarcely marked the lightning, though at times it seemed to dart its arrows on his very form; his heart was absorbed in the success of his schemes.

"Let the storm without howl on," thought he, "that within hath a respite at last. Amidst the winds and rains I can breathe more freely than I have done on the smoothest summer day. By the charm of a deeper mind and a subtler tongue, I have then conquered this desperate foe; I have

silenced this inveterate spy: and, Heaven be praised, he too has human ties; and by those ties I hold him! Now, then, I hasten to London—I arrange this annuity—see that the law tightens every cord of the compact; and when all is done, and this dangerous man fairly departed on his exile, I return to Madeline, and devote to her a life no longer the vassal of accident and the hour: but I have been taught caution. Secure as my own prudence may have made me from farther apprehension of Houseman, I will yet place myself *wholly* beyond his power: I will still consummate my former purpose, adopt a new name, and seek a new retreat; Madeline may not know the real cause; but this brain is not barren of excuse. Ah!" as drawing his cloak closer round him, he felt the purse hid within his breast which contained the order he had obtained from Lester; "Ah! this will now add its quota to purchase, not a momentary relief, but the stipend of perpetual silence. I have passed through the

ordeal easier than I had hoped for. Had the devil at his heart been more difficult to lay, so necessary is his absence, that I must have purchased it at any cost. Courage, Eugene Aram! thy mind, for which thou hast lived, and for which thou hast hazarded thy soul—if soul and mind be distinct from each other—thy mind can support thee yet through every peril: not till thou art stricken into idiotcy, shalt thou behold thyself defenceless. How cheerfully," muttered he, after a momentary pause, " how cheerfully, for safety, and to breathe with a quiet heart, the air of Madeline's presence, shall I rid myself of all save enough to defy want. And want can never *now* come to me, as of old. He who knows the sources of every science from which wealth is wrought holds even wealth at his will."

Breaking at every interval into these soliloquies, Aram continued to breast the storm until he had won half his journey, and had come upon a long

and bleak moor, which was the entrance to that beautiful line of country in which the valleys around Grassdale are embosomed: faster and faster came the rain; and though the thunder-clouds were now behind, they yet followed loweringly, in their black array, the path of the lonely horseman.

But now he heard the sound of hoofs making towards him; he drew his horse on one side of the road, and at that instant a broad flash of lightning illuminating the space around, he beheld four horsemen speeding along at a rapid gallop; they were armed, and conversing loudly—their oaths were heard jarringly and distinctly amidst all the more solemn and terrific sounds of the night. They came on, sweeping by the Student, whose hand was on his pistol, for he recognised in one of the riders the man who had escaped unwounded from Lester's house. He and his comrades were evidently, then, Houseman's desperate associates; and they too, though they were borne too rapidly by Aram to be able to rein in their horses on

the spot, had seen the solitary traveller, and already wheeled round, and called upon him to halt !

The lightning was again gone, and the darkness snatched the robbers and their intended victim from the sight of each other. But Aram had not lost a moment ; fast fled his horse across the moor, and when, with the next flash, he looked back, he saw the ruffians, unwilling even for booty to encounter the horrors of the night, had followed him but a few paces, and again turned round ; still he dashed on, and had now nearly passed the moor ; the thunder rolled fainter and fainter from behind, and the lightning only broke forth at prolonged intervals, when suddenly, after a pause of unusual duration, it brought the whole scene into a light, if less intolerable, even more livid than before. The horse, that had hitherto sped on without start or stumble, now recoiled in abrupt affright ; and the horseman, looking up at the cause, beheld the Gibbet of which Houseman had spoken immediately fronting his path,

with its ghastly tenant waving to and fro, as the winds rattled through the parched and arid bones ; and the inexpressible grin of the skull fixed, as in mockery, upon his countenance.

EUGENE ARAM.

BOOK IV.

Ἡ Κύπρις οὐ πάνδημος· ἵλασχε τὴν Θιὰν εἰπὼν
Οὐρανιάν.—

* * * * *

ΠΡΑΞΙΝΟ' Η. Θάρσου Σαπτυρίων, γλυκιρὸν τίκος οὐ λέγω ἀπόφην.
ΓΟΡΓΩ. Λισθάνεται τὸ βρέφος, ταῦ τὰν πόστιαν.

ΘΕΟΚΡ.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH WE RETURN TO WALTER.—HIS DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO MR. PERTINAX FILLGRAVE.—THE CORPORAL'S ADVICE, AND THE CORPORAL'S VICTORY.

Let a Physician be ever so excellent, there will be those that censure him.

GIL BLAS.

We left Walter in a situation of that critical nature, that it would be inhuman to delay our return to him any longer. The blow by which he had been felled, stunned him for an instant; but his frame was of no common strength and hardihood, and the imminent peril in which he was placed, served to recall him from the mo-

mentary insensibility. On recovering himself, he felt that the ruffians were dragging him towards the hedge, and the thought flashed upon him that their object was murder. Nerved by this idea, he collected his strength, and suddenly wresting himself from the grasp of one of the ruffians who had seized him by the collar, he had already gained his knee, and now his feet, when a second blow once more deprived him of sense.

When a dim and struggling consciousness recurred to him ; he found that the villains had dragged him to the opposite side of the hedge and were deliberately robbing him. He was on the point of renewing an useless and dangerous struggle, when one of the ruffians said,

“ I think he stirs, I had better draw my knife across his throat.”

“ Pooh, no !” replied another voice, “ never kill if it can be helped : trust me 'tis an ugly thing to think of afterwards. Besides, what use is it ? A robbery, in these parts, is done and

forgotten ; but a murder rouses the whole country."

" Damnation, man ! why, the deed 's done already, he 's as dead as a door-nail."

" Dead !" said the other in a startled voice ; " no, no !" and leaning down, the ruffian placed his hand on Walter's heart. The unfortunate traveller felt his flesh creep as the hand touched him, but prudently abstained from motion or exclamation. He thought, however, as with dizzy and half-shut eyes he caught the shadowy and dusk outline of the face that bent over him, so closely that he felt the breath of its lips, that it was one that he had seen before ; and as the man now rose, and the wan light of the skies gave a somewhat clearer view of his features, the supposition was heightened, though not absolutely confirmed. But Walter had no farther power to observe his plunderers : again his brain reeled ; the dark trees, the grim shadows of human forms, swam before his glazing eye ; and he sunk once more into a profound insensibility.

Meanwhile, the doughty Corporal had at the first sight of his master's fall, halted abruptly at the spot to which his steed had carried him ; and coming rapidly to the conclusion that three men were best encountered at a distance, he fired his two pistols, and without staying to see if they took effect, which, indeed, they did not, galloped down the precipitous hill with as much despatch, as if it had been the last stage to "Lunnun."

"My poor young master!" muttered he : "But if the worst comes to the worst, the chief part of the money's in the saddle-bags any how ; and so, messieurs thieves, you're bit—baugh!"

The Corporal was not long in reaching the town, and alarming the loungers at the inn-door. A *posse comitatus* was soon formed ; and, armed as if they were to have encountered all the robbers between Hounslow and the Apennine, a band of heroes, with the Corporal, who had first deliberately reloaded his pistols, at their head, set off to succour "the poor gentleman *what was* already murdered."

They had not got far before they found Walter's horse, which had luckily broke from the robbers, and was now quietly regaling himself on a patch of grass by the roadside. "He can get *his* supper, the beast," grunted the Corporal, thinking of his own; and bid one of the party try to catch the animal, which, however, would have declined all such proffers, had not a long neigh of recognition from the roman nose of the Corporal's steed, striking familiarly on the straggler's ear, called it forthwith, to the Corporal's side; and (while the two chargers exchanged greeting) the Corporal seized its rein.

When they came to the spot from which the robbers had made their sally, all was still and tranquil; no Walter was to be seen; the Corporal cautiously dismounted, and searched about with as much minuteness as if he were looking for a pin; but the host of the inn at which the travellers had dined the day before, stumbled at once on the right track. Gouts of blood on the white

chalky soil directed him to the hedge, and creeping through a small and recent gap, he discovered the yet breathing body of the young traveller.

Walter was now conducted with much care to the inn ; a Surgeon was already in attendance ; for having heard that a gentleman had been murdered without his knowledge, Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave had rushed from his house, and placed himself on the road, that the poor creature might not, at least, be buried without his assistance. So eager was he to begin, that he scarce suffered the unfortunate Walter to be taken within, before he whipped out his instruments, and set to work with the smack of an *amateur*.

Although the Surgeon declared his patient to be in the greatest possible danger, the sagacious Corporal, who thought himself more privileged to know about wounds than any man of peace, by profession, however destructive by practice, could possibly be, had himself examined those his master had received, before he went down to

taste his long-delayed supper ; and he now confidently assured the landlord, and the rest of the good company in the kitchen, that the blows on the head had been mere fly-bites, and that his master would be as well as ever in a week at the farthest.

And, indeed, when Walter the very next morning woke from the stupor, rather than sleep, he had undergone, he felt himself surprisingly better than the Surgeon, producing his probe, hastened to assure him he possibly *could* be.

By the help of Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave, Walter was detained several days in the town ; nor is it wholly improbable, but that for the dexterity of the Corporal, he might be in the town to this day ; not, indeed in the comfortable shelter of the old-fashioned inn, but in the colder quarters of a certain green spot, in which, despite of its rural attractions, few persons are willing to fix a permanent habitation.

Luckily, however, one evening, the Corporal, who had been, to say truth, very regular in his

attendance on his master ; for, bating the selfishness, consequent, perhaps, on his knowledge of the world, Jacob Bunting was a good-natured man on the whole, and liked his master as well as he did any thing, always excepting Jacobina, and board-wages ; one evening, we say, the Corporal coming into Walter's apartment, found him sitting up in his bed, with a very melancholy and dejected expression of countenance.

" And well, Sir, what does the Doctor say ? " asked the Corporal, drawing aside the curtains.

" Ah, Bunting, I fancy it 's all over with me ! "

" The Lord forbid, Sir ! you 're a-jesting, surely ? "

" Jesting ! my good fellow, ah ! just get me that phial."

" The filthy stuff ! " said the Corporal, with a wry face ; " Well, Sir, if I had had the dressing of you—been half way to Yorkshire by this. Man 's a worm ; and when a doctor gets un on his hook, he is sure to angle for the devil with the bait—augh ! "

"What! you really think that damned fellow, Fillgrave, is keeping me on in this way?"

"Is he a fool, to give up three phials a day, 4s. 6d. item, ditto, ditto?" cried the Corporal, as if astonished at the question; "but don't you feel yourself getting a deal better every day? Don't you feel all this ere stuff revive you?"

"No, indeed, I was amazingly better the first day than I am now; I progress from worse to worse. Ah! Bunting, if Peter Dealtry were here, he might help me to an appropriate epitaph: as it is, I suppose I shall be very simply labelled. Fillgrave will do the whole business, and put it down in his bill—item, nine draughts—item, one epitaph.

"Lord-a-mercy, your honour," said the Corporal, drawing out a little red-spotted pocket-handkerchief; "how can—jest so?—it's quite moving."

"I wish *we* were moving!" sighed the patient.

"And so we might be," cried the Corporal; "so we might, if you'd pluck up a bit. Just let

me look at your honour's head ; I knows what a confusion is better nor any of 'em."

The Corporal having obtained permission, now removed the bandages wherewith the Doctor had bound his intended sacrifice to Pluto, and after peering into the wounds for about a minute, he thrust out his under lip, with a contemptuous,

" Pshaugh ! augh ! And how long," said he, " does Master Fillgrave say you be to be under his hands,—augh !"

" He gives me hopes that I may be taken out an airing very gently, (yes, hearses always go very gently !) in about three weeks !"

The Corporal started, and broke into a long whistle. He then grinned from ear to ear, snapped his fingers, and said,

" Man of the world, Sir,—man of the world every inch of him !"

" He seems resolved that I shall be a man of another world," said Walter.

" Tell ye what, Sir—take my advice—your honour knows I be no fool—throw off them ere



wrappers ; let me put on scrap of plaster—pitch phials to devil—order out horses to-morrow, and when you've been in the air half an hour, won't know yourself again !”

“ Bunting ! the horses out to-morrow ?—faith, I don't think I could walk across the room.”

“ Just try, your honour.”

“ Ah ! I 'm very weak, very weak—my dressing-gown and slippers—your arm, Bunting—well, upon my honour, I walk very stoutly, eh ? I should not have thought this ! leave go : why I really get on without your assistance !”

“ Walk as well as ever you did.”

“ Now I 'm out of bed, I don't think I shall go back again to it.”

“ Would not, if I was your honour.”

“ And after so much exercise, I really fancy I 've a sort of an appetite.”

“ Like a beefsteak ?”

“ Nothing better.”

“ Pint of wine ?”

“ Why that would be too much—eh ?”

"Not it."

"Go, then, my good Bunting; go and make haste—stop, I say that d—d fellow—"

"Good sign to swear," interrupted the Corporal; "swore twice within last five minutes—famous symptom!"

"Do you choose to hear me? That d—d fellow, Fillgrave, is coming back in an hour to bleed me: do you mount guard—refuse to let him in—pay him his bill—you have the money. And harkye, don't be rude to the rascal."

"Rude, your honour! not I—been in the Forty-second—knows discipline—only rude to the privates!"

The Corporal, having seen his master conduct himself respectably toward the viands with which he supplied him—having set his room to rights, brought him the candles, borrowed him a book, and left him for the present in extremely good spirits, and prepared for the flight of the morrow; the Corporal, I say, now lighting his pipe, stationed himself at the door of the inn, and waited for Mr.

Pertinax Fillgrave. Presently the Doctor, who was a little thin man, came bustling across the street, and was about, with a familiar "Good evening," to pass by the Corporal, when that worthy, dropping his pipe, said respectfully, "Beg pardon, Sir—want to speak to you—a little favour. Will your honour walk in the back-parlour?"

"Oh! another patient," thought the Doctor; "these soldiers are careless fellows—often get into scrapes. Yes, friend, I'm at your service."

The Corporal showed the man of phials into the back-parlour, and, hemming thrice, looked sheepish, as if in doubt how to begin. It was the Doctor's business to encourage the bashful.

"Well, my good man," said he, brushing off, with the arm of his coat, some dust that had settled on his inexpressibles, "so you want to consult me?"

"Indeed, your honour, I do; but—feel a little awkward in doing so—a stranger and all."

"Pooh!—medical men are never strangers. I am the friend of every man who requires my assistance."

“Augh!—and I do require your honour’s assistance very sadly.”

“Well—well—speak out. Any thing of long standing?”

“Why, only since we have been here, Sir.”

“Oh, that’s all! Well.”

“Your honour’s so good—that—won’t scruple in telling you all. You sees as how we were robbed—master at least was—had some little in my pockets—but we poor servants are never too rich. You seems such a kind gentleman—so attentive to master—though you must have felt how disinterested it was to ‘tend a man what had been robbed—that I have no hesitation in making bold to ask you to lend us a few guineas, just to help us out with the bill here,—bother!”

“Fellow!” said the Doctor, rising, “I don’t know what you mean; but I’d have you to learn that I am not to be cheated out of my time and property. I shall insist upon being paid *my* bill instantly, before I dress your master’s wound once more.”

"Augh!" said the Corporal, who was delighted to find the Doctor come so immediately into the snare;—"won't be so cruel surely,—why, you 'll leave us without a shiner to pay my host here."

"Nonsense!—Your master, if he's a gentleman, can write home for money."

"Ah, Sir, all very well to say so;—but, between you and me and the bed-post—young master's quarrelled with old master—old master won't give him a rap,—so I'm sure, since your honour's a friend to every man who requires your assistance—noble saying, Sir!—you won't refuse us a few guineas;—and as for your bill—why—"

"Sir, you 're an impudent vagabond!" cried the Doctor, as red as a rose-draught, and flinging out of the room; "and I warn you, that I shall bring in my bill, and expect to be paid within ten minutes."

The Doctor waited for no answer—he hurried home, scratched off his account, and flew back with it in as much haste as if his patient had been

a month longer under his care, and was consequently on the brink of that happier world, where, since the inhabitants are immortal, it is very evident that doctors, as being useless, are never admitted.

The Corporal met him as before.

"There, Sir," cried the Doctor, breathlessly, and then putting his arms akimbo, "take that to your master, and desire him to pay me instantly."

"Augh! and shall do no such thing."

"You won't?"

"No, for shall pay you myself. Where's your wee stamp—eh?"

And with great composure the Corporal drew out a well-filled purse, and discharged the bill. The Doctor was so thunderstricken, that he pocketed the money without uttering a word. He consoled himself, however, with the belief that Walter, whom he had tamed into a becoming hypochondria, would be sure to send for him the next morning. Alas, for mortal expectations!—the next morning Walter was once more on the road.

CHAPTER X.

NEW TRACES OF THE FATE OF GEOFFREY LESTER.—WALTER AND THE CORPORAL PROCEED ON A FRESH EXPEDITION.—THE CORPORAL IS ESPECIALLY SAGACIOUS ON THE OLD TOPIC OF THE WORLD.—HIS OPINIONS ON THE MEN WHO CLAIM KNOWLEDGE THEREOF.—ON THE ADVANTAGES ENJOYED BY A VALET.—ON THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESSFUL LOVE.—ON VIRTUE AND THE CONSTITUTION.—ON QUALITIES TO BE DESIRED IN A MISTRESS, &c. —A LANDSCAPE.

“This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn.”—*Spectator*, No. 3.

WALTER found, while he made search himself, that it was no easy matter, in so large a county as Yorkshire, to obtain even the preliminary particulars, viz. the place of residence, and the name of the Colonel from India whose dying gift his father had left the house of the worthy Courtland, to claim and receive. But the moment he

committed the inquiry to the care of an active and intelligent lawyer, the case seemed to brighten up prodigiously ; and Walter was shortly informed that a Colonel Elmore, who had been in India, had died in the year 17— ; that by a reference to his will it appeared that he had left to Daniel Clarke the sum of a thousand pounds, and the house in which he resided before his death, the latter being merely leasehold at a high rent, was specified in the will to be of small value : it was situated in the outskirts of Knaresborough. It was also discovered that a Mr. Jonas Elmore, the only surviving executor of the will, and a distant relation of the deceased Colonel's, lived about fifty miles from York, and could, in all probability, better than any one, afford Walter those farther particulars of which he was so desirous to be informed. Walter immediately proposed to his lawyer to accompany him to this gentleman's house ; but it so happened that the lawyer could not, for three or four days, leave his business at York, and Walter, exceedingly im-

patient to proceed on the intelligence thus granted him, and disliking the meagre information obtained from letters, when a personal interview could be obtained, resolved himself to repair to Mr. Jonas Elmore's without farther delay ; and behold, therefore, our worthy Corporal and his master again mounted, and commencing a new journey.

The Corporal, always fond of adventure, was in high spirits.

“ See, Sir,” said he to his master, patting with great affection the neck of his steed, “ See, Sir, how brisk the creturs are ; what a deal of good their long rest at York city 's done 'em. Ah, your honour, what a fine town that ere be !—yet,” added the Corporal, with an air of great superiority, “ it gives you no notion of Lunnun, like—on the faith of a man, no !”

“ Well, Bunting, perhaps we may be in London within a month hence.”

“ And afore we gets there, your honour,—no offence,—but should like to give you some advice ;

'tis ticklish place, that Lunnun, and though you be by no manner of means deficient in genus, yet, Sir, *you be young, and I be—*"

" *Old,—true, Bunting,*" added Walter very gravely.

" Augh—bother ! old, Sir, old, Sir !—A man in the prime of life,—hair coal black, (batting a few grey ones that have had, since twenty—care, and military service, Sir,)—carriage straight,—teeth strong,—not an ail in the world, batting the rheumatics—is not old, Sir,—not by no manner of means,—baugh !"

" You are very right, Bunting ; when I said old, I meant experienced. I assure you I shall be very grateful for your advice ; and suppose, while we walk our horses up this hill, you begin lecture the first. London's a fruitful subject. All you can say on it won't be soon exhausted."

" Ah, may well say that," replied the Corporal, exceedingly flattered with the permission he had obtained, " and any thing my poor wit can suggest, quite at your honour's service—ehem !—

hem ! You must know by Lunnun, I means the world; and by the world means Lunnun,—know one—know t'other. But 'tis not them as affects to be most knowing as be so at bottom. Begging your honour's pardon, I thinks gentlefolks what lives only with gentlefolks, and call themselves men of the world, be often no wiser nor Pagan creturs, and live in a gentile darkness."

"The true knowledge of the world," said Walter, "is only then for the Corporals of the Forty-second,—eh, Bunting?"

"As to that, Sir," quoth the Corporal, "'tis not being of this calling or of that calling that helps one on ; 'tis an inborn sort of genus the talent of obsarving, and growing wise by obsarving. One picks up crumb here, crumb there : but if one has not good digestion, Lord, what signifies a feast ?—Healthy man thrives on a 'tatoe, sickly looks pale on a haunch. You sees, your honour, as I said afore, I was own sarvant to Colonel Dysart ; he was a Lord's nephyl, a very

gay gentleman, and great hand with the ladies,—not a man more in the world ;—so I had the opportunity of learning what 's what among the best set ; at his honour's expense, too,—augh ! To my mind, Sir, there is not a place from which a man has a better view of things than the bit carpet behind a gentleman's chair. The gentleman eats, and talks, and swears, and jests, and plays cards and makes love, and tries to cheat, and is cheated, and his man stands behind with his eyes and ears open,—augh !”

“ One should go to service to learn diplomacy, I see,” said Walter, greatly amused.

“ Does not know what 'plomacy be, Sir, but knows it would be better for many a young master nor all the Colleges ;—would not be so many bubbles if my Lord could take a turn now and then with John. A-well, Sir !—how I used to laugh in my sleeve like, when I saw my master, who was thought the knowingest gentleman about Court, taken in every day smack afore my face. There was one lady whom he had tried hard, as

he thought, to get away from her husband ; and he used to be so mighty pleased at every glance from her brown eyes—and be d—d to them !—and so careful the husband should not see—so pluming himself on his discretion here, and his conquest there,—when, Lord bless you, it was all settled 'twixt man and wife beforehand ! And while the Colonel laughed at the cuckold, the cuckold laughed at the dupe. For you sees, Sir, as how the Colonel was a rich man, and the jewels as he bought for the lady went half into the husband's pocket—he ! he !—That's the way of the world, Sir,—that's the way of the world !”

“ Upon my word, you draw a very bad picture of the world : you colour highly ; and, by the way, I observe that whenever you find any man committing a roguish action, instead of calling him a scoundrel, you show those great teeth of yours, and chuckle out ‘A man of the world ! a man of the world !’ ”

“ To be sure, your honour ; the proper name, too. ‘Tis your green-horns who fly into a passion,

and use hard words. You see, Sir, there's one thing we larn afore all other things in the world—to butter bread. Knowledge of others, means only the knowledge which side bread 's buttered. In short, Sir, the wiser grow, the more take care of oursels. Some persons make a mistake, and, in trying to take care of themsels, run neck into halter—baugh ! they are not rascals—they are *would-be* men of the world. Others be more prudent, (for, as I said afore, Sir, discretion is a pair of stirrups;) *they* be the true men of the world."

" I should have thought," said Walter, " that the knowledge of the world might be that knowledge which preserves us from being cheated, but not that which enables us to cheat."

" Augh !" quoth the Corporal, with that sort of smile with which you see an old philosopher put down a sounding error from the lips of a young disciple who flatters himself he has uttered something prodigiously fine,—" Augh ! and did not I tell you, t'other day, to look at the pro-

fessions, your honour ? What would a lawyer be if he did not know how to cheat a witness and humbug a jury ?—knows he is lying,—why is he lying ? for love of his fees, or his fame like, which gets fees ;—Augh ! is not that cheating others ?—The doctor, too, Master Fillgrave, for instance ?—”

“ Say no more of doctors ; I abandon them to your satire, without a word.”

“ The lying knaves ! Don’t they say one’s well when one’s ill—ill when one’s well ?—profess to know what don’t know ?—thrust solemn phizzes into every abomination, as if larning lay hid in a —? and all for their neighbours’ money, or their own reputation, which makes money—augh ! In short, Sir—look where will, impossible to see so much cheating allowed, praised, encouraged, and feel very angry with a cheat who has only made a mistake. But when I sees a man butter his bread carefully—knife steady—butter thick, and hungry fellows looking on and licking chops—mothers stopping their brats—‘ See, child—respectable man

—how thick his bread's buttered!—pull off your hat to him:—When I sees that, my heart warms: there's the *true* man of the world—augh!"

" Well, Bunting," said Walter, laughing, " though you are thus lenient to those unfortunate gentlemen whom others call rogues, and thus laudatory of gentlemen who are at best discreetly selfish, I suppose you admit the possibility of virtue, and your heart warms as much when you see a man of worth as when you see a man of the world?"

" Why, you knows, your honour," answered the Corporal, " so far as vartue's concerned, there's a deal in constitution; but as for knowledge of the world, one gets it oneself!"

" I don't wonder, Bunting—as your opinion of women is much the same as your opinion of men—that you are still unmarried."

" Augh! but your honour mistakes!—I am no mice-and-trope. Men are neither one thing nor t' other—neither good nor bad. A prudent person has nothing to fear from 'em—nor

a foolish one any thing to gain—baugh ! As to the women creturs, your honour, as I said, vartue's a deal in the constitution. Would not ask what a lassie's mind be—nor what her eddycation ;—but see what her habits be, that's all—habits and constitution all one — play into one another's hands."

" And what sort of signs, Bunting, would you mostly esteem in a lady ?"

" First place, Sir — woman I 'd marry, must not mope when alone !—must be able to 'muse herself ; must be easily 'mused. That's a great sign, Sir, of an innocent mind, to be tickled with straws. Besides, employments keeps 'em out of harm's way. Second place, should obsarve, if she was very fond of places, your honour—sorry to move—that 's a sure sign she won't tire easily ; but that if she like you now from fancy, she 'll like you by and by from custom. Thirdly, your honour, she should not be averse to dress — a leaning that way shows she has a desire to please : people who don't care about pleasing, always sullen.

Fourthly, she must bear to be crossed—I'd be quite sure that she might be contradicted, without mumping or storming;—'cause then, you knows, your honour, if she wanted any thing expensive—need not give it—augh! Fifthly, must not be over religious, your honour; they pye-house she-creturs always thinks themsels so much better nor we men;—don't understand our language and ways, your honour: they wants us not only to belave, but to tremble—bother!"

"I like your description well enough, on the whole," said Walter, "and when I look out for a wife, I shall come to you for advice."

"Your honour may have it already—Miss El-linor's jist the thing."

Walter turned away his head, and told Bunting, with great show of indignation, not to be a fool.

The Corporal, who was not quite certain of his ground here, but who knew that Madeline, at all events, was going to be married to Aram, and deemed it, therefore, quite useless to waste any

praise upon *her*, thought that a few random shots of eulogium were worth throwing away on a chance, and consequently continued.

“Augh, your honour — 'tis not 'cause I have eyes, that I be's a fool. Miss Ellinor and your honour be only cousins, to be sure; but more like brother and sister, nor any thing else. Howsoever, she's a rare cretur, whoever gets her. has a face that puts one in good-humour with the world, if one sees it first thing in the morning—'tis as good as the sun in July—augh! But, as I was saying, your honour — 'bout the women-creturs in general——”

“Enough of them, Bunting; let us suppose you have been so fortunate as to find one to suit you—how would you woo her? Of course, there are certain secrets of courtship, which you will not hesitate to impart to one, who, like me, wants such assistance from art—much more than you can do, who are so bountifully favoured by Nature.”

“As to Nature,” replied the Corporal, with considerable modesty, for he never disputed the

truth of the compliment — “ ‘tis not ‘cause a man be six feet without’s shoes, that he’s any nearer to lady’s heart. Sir, I will own to you, howsoever it makes ‘gainst your honour and myself, for that matter — that don’t think one is a bit more lucky with the ladies for being so handsome! ‘Tis all very well with them ere willing ones, your honour — caught at a glance ; but as for the better sort, one’s beauty’s all bother! Why, Sir, when we see some of the most fortunatest men among she-creturs — what poor little minnikens they be! One’s a dwarf—another knock-kneed— a third squints —and a fourth might be shown for a hape! Neither, Sir, is it your soft, insinivating, die-away youths, as seem at first so seductive ; they do very well for lovers, your honour ; but then it’s always rejected ones! Neither, your honour, does the art of succeeding with the ladies ‘quire all those finniken, nimini-pinimi’s, flourishes, and maxims, and saws, which the Colonel, my old master, and the great gentlefolks, as be knowing,

call the art of love—baugh ! The whole science, Sir, consists in these two rules—‘ Ask soon, and ask often.’ ”

“ There seems no great difficulty in them, Bunting.”

“ Not to us who has gumption, Sir ; but then there is summut in the manner of axing—one can’t be too hot—can’t flatter too much—and, above all, one must never take a refusal. There, Sir, now—if you takes my advice—may break the peace of all the husbands in Lunnun—bother—whaugh !”

“ My uncle little knows what a praiseworthy tutor he has secured me in you, Bunting,” said Walter, laughing : “ And now, while the road is so good, let us make the most of it.”

As they had set out late in the day, and the Corporal was fearful of another attack from a hedge, he resolved, that about evening, one of the horses should be seized with a sudden lameness, (which he effected by slyly inserting a stone between the shoe and the hoof,) that required immediate atten-

tion and a night's rest ; so that it was not till the early noon of the next day that our travellers entered the village in which Mr. Jonas Elmore resided.

It was a soft, tranquil day, though one of the very last in October ; for the reader will remember that Time had not stood still during Walter's submission to the care of Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave, and his subsequent journey and researches.

The sun-light rested on a broad patch of green heath, covered with furze, and around it were scattered the cottages and farm-houses of the little village. On the other side, as Walter descended the gentle hill that led into this remote hamlet, wide and flat meadows, interspersed with several fresh and shaded ponds, stretched away towards a belt of rich woodland gorgeous with the melancholy pomp by which the "regal year" seeks to veil its decay. Among these meadows you might now see groups of cattle quietly grazing, or standing half hid in the still and sheltered pools. Still farther, crossing to the woods, a solitary sportsman walked careless on, sur-

rounded by some half a dozen spaniels, and the shrill small tongue of one younger straggler of the canine crew, who had broke indecorously from the rest, and already entered the wood, might be just heard, softened down by the distance, into a wild, cheery sound, that animated, without disturbing, the serenity of the scene.

“After all,” said Walter aloud, “the scholar was right—there is nothing like the country!”

“Oh, happiness of sweet retired content,
To be at once secure and innocent!”

“Be them Verses in the Psalms, Sir?” said the Corporal, who was close behind.

“No, Bunting; but they were written by one who, if I recollect right, set the Psalms to verse:/* I hope they meet with your approbation?”

“Indeed, Sir, and no—since they ben’t in the Psalms, one has no right to think about ‘em at all.”

“And why, Mr. Critic?”

“’Cause what’s the use of security, if one’s

* Denham.

innocent, and does not mean to take advantage of it—baugh ! One does not lock the door for nothing, your honour!"

" You shall enlarge on that honest doctrine of yours another time; meanwhile, call that shepherd, and ask the way to Mr. Elmore's."

The Corporal obeyed, and found that a clump of trees, at the farther corner of the waste land, was the grove that surrounded Mr. Elmore's house ; a short canter across the heath brought them to a white gate, and having passed this, a comfortable brick mansion of moderate size stood before them.

CHAPTER III.

A SCHOLAR, BUT OF A DIFFERENT MOULD FROM THE STUDENT OF GRASSDALE.—NEW PARTICULARS CONCERNING GEOFFREY LESTER.—THE JOURNEY RECOMMENCED.

“Ingenium sibi quod vacuas desumpsit Athenas
Et studiis annis septem dedit, insenuitque

Libris_____”

HORAT.

“_____ Volat, ambiguis
Mobilis alis, Hora.”

SENECA.

UPON inquiring for Mr. Elmore, Walter was shown into a handsome library, that appeared well-stocked with books, of that good, old-fashioned size and solidity, which are now fast passing from the world, or at least shrinking into old shops and public collections. The time may come, when the mouldering remains of a folio will attract as much philosophical astonish-

ment as the bones of the mammoth. For behold, the deluge of writers hath produced a new world of small octavo ! and in the next generation, thanks to the popular libraries, we shall only vibrate between the duodecimo and the diamond edition. Nay, we foresee the time when a very handsome collection may be carried about in one's waistcoat-pocket, and a whole library of the British Classics be neatly arranged in a well-compacted snuff-box.

In a few minutes Mr. Elmore made his appearance ; he was a short, well-built man, about the age of fifty. Contrary to the established mode, he wore no wig, and was very bald ; except at the sides of the head, and a little circular island of hair in the centre. But this defect was rendered the less visible by a profusion of powder. He was dressed with evident care and precision ; a snuff-coloured coat was adorned with a respectable profusion of gold lace ; his breeches were of plum-coloured satin ; his salmon-coloured stockings, scrupulously drawn up, displayed a very hand-

some calf ; and a pair of steel buckles in his high-heeled and square-toed shoes, were polished into a lustre which almost rivalled the splendour of diamonds. Mr. Jonas Elmore was a beau, a wit, and a scholar of the old school. He abounded in jests, in quotations, in smart sayings, and pertinent anecdotes : but, withal, his classical learning, (out of the classics he knew little enough,) was at once elegant, but wearisome ; pedantic, but profound.

To this gentleman Walter presented a letter of introduction which he had obtained from a distinguished clergyman in York. Mr. Elmore received it with a profound salutation—

“ Aha, from my friend, Dr. Hebraist,” said he, glancing at the seal, “ a most worthy man, and a ripe scholar. I presume at once, Sir, from his introduction, that you yourself have cultivated the *literas humaniores*. Pray sit down—ay—I see, you take up a book, an excellent symptom ; it gives me an immediate insight into your character. But you have chanced, Sir, on light

reading,—one of the Greek novels, I think,—you must not judge of my studies by such a specimen."

" Nevertheless, Sir, it does not seem to my unskilful eye very easy Greek."

" Pretty well, Sir ; barbarous, but amusing,—pray continue it. The triumphal entry of Paulus Emilius is not ill told. I confess, that I think novels might be made much higher works than they have been yet. Doubtless, you remember what Aristotle says concerning Painters and Sculptors, 'that they teach and recommend virtue in a more efficacious and powerful manner, than Philosophers by their dry precepts, and are more capable of amending the vicious, than the best moral lessons without such aid.' But how much more, Sir, can a good novelist do this, than the best sculptor or painter in the world ! Every one can be charmed by a fine novel, few by a fine painting. ' Indocti rationem artis intelligunt, indocti voluptatem.' A happy sentence that in Quintilian, Sir, is it not ? But, bless me, I am forgetting the letter

of my good friend Dr. Hebraist. The charms of your conversation carry me away. And indeed I have seldom the happiness to meet a gentleman so well-informed as yourself. I confess, Sir, I confess that I still retain the tastes of my boyhood ; the Muses cradled my childhood, they now smooth the pillow of my footstool—*Quem tu, Melpomene, &c.*—You are not yet subject to gout, *dira podagra* : By the way, how is the worthy Doctor since his attack ?—Ah, see now, if you have not still, by your delightful converse, kept me from his letter—yet, positively I need no introduction to you, Apollo has already presented you to me. And as for the Doctor's letter, I will read it after dinner ; for as Seneca—”

“ I beg your pardon a thousand times, Sir,” said Walter, who began to despair of ever coming to the matter which seemed lost sight of beneath this battery of erudition, “ but you will find by Dr. Hebraist’s letter, that it is only on business of the utmost importance that I have

presumed to break in upon the learned leisure of Mr. Jonas Elmore."

"Business!" replied Mr. Elmore, producing his spectacles, and deliberately placing them athwart his nose,

"His mane edictum, post prandia Callirhoen &c.—"

"Business in the morning, and the ladies after dinner. Well, Sir, I will yield to you in the one, and you must yield to me in the other: I will open the letter, and you shall dine here, and be introduced to Mrs. Elmore;—What is your opinion of the modern method of folding letters? I—but I see you are impatient." Here Mr. Elmore at length broke the seal; and to Walter's great joy fairly read the contents within.

"Oh! I see, I see!" he said, refolding the epistle, and placing it in his pocket-book; "my friend, Dr. Hebraist, says you are anxious to be informed whether Mr. Clarke ever received the legacy of my poor cousin, Colonel Elmore; and if so, any tidings I can give you of Mr. Clarke himself; or any clue to discover him will be

highly acceptable. I gather, Sir, from my friend's letter, that this is the substance of your business with me, *caput negotii*;—although, like Timanthes, the painter, he leaves more to be understood than is described, '*intelligitur plus quam pingitur*,' as Pliny has it."

"Sir," said Walter, drawing his chair close to Mr. Elmore, and his anxiety forcing itself to his countenance, "that is indeed the substance of my business with you; and so important will be any information you can give me that I shall esteem it a—"

"Not a very great favour, eh?—not very great?"

"Yes, indeed, a very great obligation."

"I hope not, Sir; for what says Tacitus—that profound reader of the human heart,—'*beneficia eo usque laeta sunt*,' &c.; favours easily repaid beget affection—favours beyond return engender hatred. But, Sir, a truce to trifling;" and here Mr. Elmore composed his countenance, and changed,—which he could do at will, so that the change was

not expected to last long—the pedant for the man of business.

“ Mr. Clarke did receive his legacy : the lease of the house at Knaresborough was also sold by his desire, and produced the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds ; which being added to the farther sum of a thousand pounds, which was bequeathed to him, amounted to seventeen hundred and fifty pounds. It so happened, that my cousin had possessed some very valuable jewels, which were bequeathed to myself. I, Sir, studious, and a cultivator of the Muse, had no love and no use for these baubles ; I preferred barbaric gold to barbaric pearl ; and knowing that Clarke had been in India, from whence these jewels had been brought, I showed them to him, and consulted his knowledge on these matters, as to the best method of obtaining a sale. He offered to purchase them of me, under the impression that he could turn them to a profitable speculation in London. Accordingly we came to terms : I sold the greater part of them to him for a sum a

little exceeding a thousand pounds. He was pleased with his bargain ; and came to borrow the rest of me, in order to look at them more considerately at home, and determine whether or not he should buy them also. Well, Sir, (but here comes the remarkable part of the story,) about three days after this last event, Mr. Clarke and my jewels both disappeared in rather a strange and abrupt manner. In the middle of the night he left his lodging at Knaresborough, and never returned ; neither himself nor my jewels were ever heard of more !”

“ Good God !” exclaimed Walter, greatly agitated ; “ what was supposed to be the cause of his disappearance ?”

“ That,” replied Elmore, “ was never positively traced. It excited great surprise and great conjecture at the time. Advertisements and hand-bills were circulated throughout the country, but in vain. Mr. Clarke was evidently a man of eccentric habits, of a hasty temper, and a wandering manner of life ; yet it is scarcely probable that

he took this sudden manner of leaving the country either from whim or some secret but honest motive never divulged. The fact is, that he owed a few debts in the town — that he had my jewels in his possession, and as (pardon me for saying this, since you take an interest in him,) his connections were entirely unknown in these parts, and his character not very highly estimated,— (whether from his manner, or his conversation, or some undefined and vague rumours, I cannot say) —it was considered by no means improbable that he had decamped with his property in this sudden manner in order to save himself that trouble of settling accounts which a more seemly and public method of departure might have rendered necessary. A man of the name of Houseman, with whom he was acquainted, (a resident in Knaresborough,) declared that Clarke had borrowed rather a considerable sum from him, and did not scruple openly to accuse him of the evident design to avoid repayment. A few more dark but utterly groundless conjectures were afloat ; and since

the closest search—the minutest inquiry was employed without any result, the supposition that he might have been robbed and murdered was strongly entertained for some time; but as his body was never found, nor suspicion directed against any particular person, these conjectures insensibly died away; and being so complete a stranger to these parts, the very circumstance of his disappearance was not likely to occupy, for very long, the attention of that old gossip the Public, who, even in the remotest parts, has a thousand topics to fill up her time and talk. And now, Sir, I think you know as much of the particulars of the case as any one in these parts can inform you."

We may imagine the various sensations which this unsatisfactory intelligence caused in the adventurous son of the lost wanderer. He continued to throw out additional guesses, and to make further inquiries concerning a tale which seemed to him so mysterious, but without effect; and he had the mortification to perceive, that the shrewd

Jonas was, in his own mind, fully convinced that the permanent disappearance of Clark was accounted for only by the most dishonest motives.

"And," added Elmore, "I am confirmed in this belief by discovering afterwards from a tradesman in York who had seen my cousin's jewels—that those I had trusted to Mr. Clarke's hands were more valuable than I had imagined them, and therefore it was probably worth his while to make off with them as quietly as possible. He went on foot, leaving his horse, a sorry nag, to settle with me and the other claimants."

"*I, pedes quo te rapiunt et auræ !*"

"Heavens!" thought Walter, sinking back in his chair sickened and disheartened, "what a parent, if the opinions of all men who knew him be true, do I thus zealously seek to recover!"

The good-natured Elmore, perceiving the unwelcome and painful impression his account had produced on his young guest, now exerted himself to remove, or at least to lessen it; and turning the conversation into a classical channel,

which with him was the Lethe to all cares, he soon forgot that Clarke had ever existed, in expatiating on the unappreciated excellences of Propertius, who, to his mind, was the most tender of all elegiac poets, solely because he was the most learned. Fortunately this vein of conversation, however tedious to Walter, preserved him from the necessity of rejoinder, and left him to the quiet enjoyment of his own gloomy and restless reflections.

At length the time touched upon dinner ; Elmore, starting up, adjourned to the drawing-room, in order to present the handsome stranger to the *placens uxor*—the pleasing wife, whom, in passing through the hall, he eulogized with an amazing felicity of diction.

The object of these praises was a tall, meagre lady, in a yellow dress carried up to the chin, and who added a slight squint to the charms of red hair, ill concealed by powder, and the dignity of a prodigiously high nose. “ There is nothing, Sir,” said Elmore, “ nothing, believe me, like ma-

rimonial felicity. Julia, my dear, I trust the chickens will not be overdone."

"Indeed, Mr. Elmore, I cannot tell; I did not boil them."

"Sir," said Elmore, turning to his guest, "I do not know whether you will agree with me, but I think a slight tendency to gourmandism is absolutely necessary to complete the character of a truly classical mind. So many beautiful touches are there in the ancient poets—so many delicate allusions in history and in anecdote relating to the gratification of the palate, that if a man have no correspondent sympathy with the illustrious epicures of old, he is rendered incapable of enjoying the most beautiful passages, that—Come, Sir, the dinner is served:

"*'Nutrimus lautis mollissima corpora menias.'*"

As they crossed the hall to the dining-room, a young lady, whom Elmore hastily announced as his only daughter, appeared descending the stairs, having evidently retired for the purpose of re-arranging her attire for the conquest of the stranger.

There was something in Miss Elmore that reminded Walter of Ellinor, and, as the likeness struck him, he felt, by the sudden and involuntary sigh it occasioned, how much the image of his cousin had lately gained ground upon his heart.

Nothing of any note occurred during dinner, until the appearance of the second course, when Elmore, throwing himself back with an air of content, that signified the first edge of his appetite was blunted, observed,

“ Sir, the second course I always opine to be the more dignified and rational part of a repast—

“ ‘ Quod nunc ratio est, impetus ante fuit.’ ”

“ Ah ! Mr. Elmore,” said the lady, glancing towards a brace of very fine pigeons, “ I cannot tell you how vexed I am at a mistake of the gardener’s: you remember my poor pet pigeons, so attached to each other—would not mix with the rest—quite an inseparable friendship, Mr. Lester —well, they were killed by mistake, for a couple of vulgar pigeons. Ah ! I could not touch a bit of them for the world.”

" My love," said Elmore, pausing, and with great solemnity, " hear how beautiful a consolation is afforded to you in Valerius Maximus :—
‘ Ubi idem et maximus et honestissimus amor est, aliquando præstat morte jungi quam vitâ distrahi ;’ which being interpreted, means, that wheréver, as in the case of your pigeons, a thoroughly high and sincere affection exists, it is sometimes better to be joined in death than divided in life.—Give me half the fatter one, if you please, Julia."

" Sir," said Elmore, when the ladies withdrew, " I cannot tell you how pleased I am to meet with a gentleman so deeply imbued with classic lore. I remember, several years ago, before my poor cousin died, it was my lot, when I visited him at Knaresborough, to hold some delightful conversations on learned matters with a very rising young scholar who then resided at Knaresborough,—Eugene Aram. Conversations as difficult to obtain as delightful to remember, for he was exceedingly reserved."

“Aram!” repeated Walter.

“What, you know him then?—and where does he live now?”

“In ——, very near my uncle’s residence. He is certainly a remarkable man.”

“Yes, indeed he promised to become so. At the time I refer to, he was poor to penury, and haughty as poor; but it was wonderful to note the iron energy with which he pursued his progress to learning. Never did I see a youth,—at that time he was no more,—so devoted to knowledge for itself.

‘*Doctrinæ pretium triste magister habet.*’

“Methinks,” added Elmore, “I can see him now, stealing away from the haunts of men,

‘With even step and musing gait,’

across the quiet fields, or into the woods, whence he was certain not to re-appear till night-fall. Ah! he was a strange and solitary being, but full of genius, and promise of bright things hereafter. I have often heard since of his fame as a scholar, but could never learn where he lived,

or what was now his mode of life. Is he yet married?"

"Not yet, I believe; but he is not now so absolutely poor as you describe him to have been then, though certainly far from rich."

"Yes, yes, I remember that he received a legacy from a relation shortly before he left Knaresborough. He had very delicate health at that time: has he grown stronger with increasing years?"

"He does not complain of ill health. And pray, was he then of the same austere and blameless habits of life that he now professes?"

"Nothing *could* be so faultless as his character appeared; the passions of youth—(ah! *I* was a wild fellow at his age,) never seemed to venture near one

'Quem casto erudit docta Minerva sinu.'

Well, I am surprised he has not married. We scholars, Sir, fall in love with abstractions, and fancy the first woman we see is——Sir, let us drink the ladies."

The next day Walter, having resolved to set

out for Knaresborough, directed his course towards that town ; he thought it yet possible that he might, by strict personal inquiry, continue the clue that Elmore's account had, to present appearance, broken. The pursuit in which he was engaged, combined, perhaps, with the early disappointment to his affections, had given a grave and solemn tone to a mind naturally ardent and elastic. His character acquired an earnestness and a dignity from late events ; and all that once had been hope within him, deepened into thought. As now, on a gloomy and clouded day he pursued his course along a bleak and melancholy road, his mind was filled with that dark presentiment—that shadow from the coming event, which superstition believes the herald of the more tragic discoveries, or the more fearful incidents of life ; he felt steeled, and prepared for some dread *dénouement*,—to a journey to which the hand of Providence seemed to conduct his steps ; and he looked on the shroud that Time casts over all beyond the present moment with the same intense

and painful resolve with which, in the tragic representations of life, we await the drawing up of the curtain before the last act, which contains the catastrophe—that while we long, we half shudder to behold.

Meanwhile, in following the adventures of Walter Lester, we have greatly outstrip the progress of events at Grassdale, and thither we now return.

CHAPTER IV.

ARAM'S DEPARTURE.—MADELINE.—EXAGGERATION OF SENTIMENT NATURAL IN LOVE.—MADELINE'S LETTER.—WALTER'S.—THE WALK.—TWO VERY DIFFERENT PERSONS, YET BOTH INMATES OF THE SAME COUNTRY VILLAGE.—THE HUMOURS OF LIFE, AND ITS DARK PASSIONS, ARE FOUND IN JUXTA-POSITION EVERYWHERE.

“Her thoughts as pure as the chaste morning’s breath,
When from the Night’s cold arms it creeps away,
Were elothed in words.”

Detraction Execrated, by Sir J. Suckling.

“——Urticea proxima sepe rosa est.”—OVID.

“YOU positively leave us then to-day, Eugene?” said the Squire.

“Indeed,” answered Aram, “I hear from my creditor, (now no longer so, thanks to you,) that my relation is so dangerously ill, that if I have any wish to see her alive, I have not an hour to lose. It is the last surviving relative I have in the world.”

“I can say no more, then,” rejoined the Squire,

shrugging his shoulders : “ When do you expect to return ? ”

“ At least, ere the day fixed for the wedding,” answered Aram, with a grave and melancholy smile.

“ Well, can you find time, think you, to call at the lodging in which my nephew proposed to take up his abode,—*my* old lodging ;—I will give you the address,—and inquire if Walter has been heard of there : I confess that I feel considerable alarm on his account. Since that short and hurried letter which I read to you, I have heard nothing of him.”

“ You may rely on my seeing him if in London, and faithfully reporting to you all that I can learn towards removing your anxiety.”

“ I do not doubt it ; no heart is so kind as yours, Eugene. You will not depart without receiving the additional sum you are entitled to claim from me, since you think it may be useful to you in London, should you find a favourable opportunity of increasing your annuity. And now I will no longer detain you from taking your leave of Madeline.”

The plausible story which Aram had invented of the illness and approaching death of his last living relation, was readily believed by the simple family to whom it was told ; and Madeline herself checked her tears that she might not, for *his* sake,adden a departure that seemed inevitable. Aram accordingly repaired to London that day,—the one that followed the night which witnessed his fearful visit to the “ Devil’s Crag.”

It is precisely at this part of my history that I love to pause for a moment ; a sort of breathing interval between the cloud that has been long gathering, and the storm that is about to burst. And this interval is not without its fleeting gleam of quiet and holy sunshine.

It was Madeline’s first absence from her lover since their vows had plighted them to each other ; and that first absence, when softened by so many hopes as smiled upon her, is perhaps one of the most touching passages in the history of a woman’s love. It is marvellous how many things, unheeded before, suddenly become dear. She then

feels what a power of consecration there was in the mere presence of the one beloved ; the spot he touched, the book he read, have become a part of him—are no longer inanimate—are inspired, and have a being and a voice. And the heart, too, soothed in discovering so many new treasures, and opening so delightful a world of memory, is not yet acquainted with that weariness—that sense of exhaustion and solitude which are the true pains of absence, and belong to the absence not of hope but regret.

“ You are cheerful, dear Madeline,” said Ellinor, “ though you did not think it possible, and he not here !”

“ I am occupied,” replied Madeline, “ in discovering how much I loved him.”

We do wrong when we censure a certain exaggeration in the sentiments of those who love. True passion is necessarily heightened by its very ardour to an elevation that seems extravagant only to those who cannot feel it. The lofty language of a hero is a part of his character ; without that

largeness of idea he had not been a hero. With love, it is the same as with glory: what common minds would call natural in sentiment, merely because it is homely, is not natural, except to tamed affections. That is a very poor, nay, a very coarse, love, in which the imagination makes not the greater part. And the Frenchman, who censured the love of his mistress because it *was* so mixed with the imagination, quarrelled with the body, for the soul which inspired and preserved it.

Yet we do not say that Madeline was so possessed by the confidence of her love, that she did not admit the intrusion of a single doubt or fear; when she recalled the frequent gloom and moody fitfulness of her lover—his strange and mysterious communings with self—the sorrow which, at times, as on that Sabbath eve when he wept upon her bosom, appeared suddenly to come upon a nature so calm and stately, and without a visible cause; when she recalled all these symptoms of a heart not now at rest, it was not possible for her to reject altogether a certain vague and dreary ap-

prehension. Nor did she herself, although to Ellinor she so affected, ascribe this cloudiness and caprice of mood merely to the result of a solitary and meditative life ; she attributed them to the influence of an early grief, perhaps linked with the affections, and did not doubt but that one day or another she should learn its secret. As for remorse—the memory of any former sin—a life so austere blameless, a disposition so prompt to the activity of good, and so enamoured of its beauty—a mind so cultivated, a temper so gentle, and a heart so easily moved—all would have forbidden, to natures far more suspicious than Madeline's, the conception of such a thought. And so, with a patient gladness, though not without some mixture of anxiety, she suffered herself to glide onward to a future, which, come cloud, come shine, was, she believed at least, to be shared with him.

On looking over the various papers from which I have woven this tale, I find a letter from Madeline to Aram, dated at this time. The characters, traced in the delicate and fair Italian hand covet-

ed at that period, are fading, and, in one part, wholly obliterated by time; but there seems to me so much of what is genuine in the heart's beautiful romance in this effusion, that I will lay it before the reader without adding or altering a word.

“ Thank you—thank you, dearest Eugene!—I have received, then, the first letter you ever wrote me. I cannot tell you how strange it seemed to me, and how agitated I felt on seeing it, more so, I think, than if it had been yourself who had returned. However, when the first delight of reading it faded away, I found that it had not made me so happy as it ought to have done—as I thought at first it had done. You seem sad and melancholy; a certain nameless gloom appears to me to hang over your whole letter. It affects my spirits—why I know not—and my tears fall even while I read the assurances of your unaltered, unalterable love—and yet this assurance your Madeline—vain girl!—never for a moment disbelieves.

I have often read and often heard of the distrust and jealousy that accompany love ; but I think that such a love must be a vulgar and low sentiment. To me there seems a religion in love, and its very foundation is in faith. You say, dearest, that the noise and stir of the great city oppress and weary you even more than you had expected. You say those harsh faces, in which business, and care, and avarice, and ambition write their lineaments, are wholly unfamiliar to you ;—you turn aside to avoid them,—you wrap yourself up in your solitary feelings of aversion to those you see, and you call upon those not present—upon your Madeline ! And would that your Madeline were with you ! It seems to me—perhaps you will smile when I say this—that I alone can understand you—I alone can read your heart and your emotions ;—and oh ! dearest Eugene, that I could read also enough of your past history to know all that has cast so habitual a shadow over that lofty heart and that calm and profound nature ! You smile when I ask you—but sometimes you sigh,

—and the sigh pleases and soothes me better than the smile. * * * *

“ We have heard nothing more of Walter, and my father begins at times to be seriously alarmed about him. Your account, too, corroborates that alarm. It is strange that he has not yet visited London, and that you can obtain no clue of him. He is evidently still in search of his lost parent, and following some obscure and uncertain track. Poor Walter! God speed him! The singular fate of his father, and the many conjectures respecting him, have, I believe, preyed on Walter’s mind more than he acknowledged. Ellinor found a paper in his closet, where we had occasion to search the other day for something belonging to my father, which was scribbled with all the various fragments of guess or information concerning my uncle, obtained from time to time, and interspersed with some remarks by Walter himself, that affected me strangely. It seems to have been from early childhood the one desire of my cousin to discover his father’s fate. Perhaps the dis-

covery may be already made ;—perhaps my long-lost uncle may yet be present at our wedding.

“ You ask me, Eugene, if I still pursue my botanical researches. Sometimes I do ; but the flower now has no fragrance—and the herb no secret, that I care for ; and astronomy, which you had just begun to teach me, pleases me more ; —the flowers charm me when you are present ; but the stars speak to me of you in absence. Perhaps it would not be so, had I loved a being less exalted than you. Every one, even my father, even Ellinor, smile when they observe how incessantly I think of you—how utterly you have become all in all to me. I could not *tell* this to you, though I write it : is it not strange that letters should be more faithful than the tongue ? And even *your* letter, mournful as it is, seems to me kinder, and dearer, and more full of yourself, than with all the magic of your language, and the silver sweetness of your voice, your spoken words are. I walked by your house yesterday ; the windows were closed—there was

a strange air of lifelessness and dejection about it. Do you remember the evening in which I first entered that house? Do you—or rather is there one hour in which it is not present to you? For me, I live in the past,—it is the present—(which is without you,) in which I have no life. I passed into the little garden, that with your own hands you have planted for me, and filled with flowers. Ellinor was with me, and she saw my lips move. She asked me what I was saying to myself. I would not tell her—I was praying for you, my kind, my beloved Eugene. I was praying for the happiness of your future years—praying that I might requite your love. Whenever I feel the most, I am the most inclined to prayer. Sorrow, joy, tenderness, all emotion, lift up my heart to God. And what a delicious overflow of the heart is prayer! When I am with you—and I feel that you love me—my happiness would be painful, if there were no God whom I might bless for its excess. Do those, who believe not, love?—have they deep emotions?—can they

feel truly—devotedly? Why, when I talk thus to you—do you always answer me with that chilling and mournful smile? You would make religion only the creation of reason—as well might you make love the same—what is either, unless you let it spring also from the feelings?

“ When—when—when will you return? I think I love you now more than ever. I think I have more courage to tell you so. So many things I have to say—so many events to relate. For what is not an event to us? the least incident that has happened to either—the very fading of a flower, if you have worn it, is a whole history to me.

“ Adieu, God bless you—God reward you—God keep your heart with Him, dearest, dearest Eugene. And may you every day know better and better how utterly you are loved by your

“ MADELINE.”

The epistle to which Lester referred as received from Walter, was one written on the day of his

escape from Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave, a short note, rather than letter, which ran as follows.

“ MY DEAR UNCLE,

“ I have met with an accident which confined me to my bed ;—a rencontre, indeed, with the Knights of the Road—nothing serious, (so do not be alarmed !) though the Doctor would fain have made it so. I am just about to recommence my journey, but not towards London ; on the contrary, northward.

“ I have, partly through the information of your old friend Mr. Courtland, partly by accident, found what I hope may prove a clue to the fate of my father. I am now departing to put this hope to the issue. More I would fain say ; but lest the expectation should prove fallacious, I will not dwell on circumstances which would in that case only create in you a disappointment similar to my own. Only this take with you, that my father’s proverbial good luck seems to have visited him since your latest news of his fate ;

a legacy, though not a large one, awaited his return to England from India; but see if I am not growing prolix already—I must break off in order to reserve you the pleasure (may it be so !) of a full surprise!

“God bless you, my dear Uncle! I write in spirits and hope; kindest love to all at home.

“WALTER LESTER.

“P. S. Tell Ellinor that my bitterest misfortune in the adventure I have referred to, was to be robbed of her purse. Will she knit me another? By the way, I encountered Sir Peter Hales; such an open-hearted, generous fellow as you said! ‘thereby hangs a tale.’”

This letter, which provoked all the curiosity of our little circle, made them anxiously look forward to every post for additional explanation, but that explanation came not. And they were forced to console themselves with the evident exhilaration under which Walter wrote, and the probable supposition that he delayed farther information until it could be ample and satisfactory.—“Knights

of the Road," quoth Lester one day, " I wonder if they were any of the gang that have just visited us. Well, but poor boy ! he does not say whether he has any money left ; yet if he *were* short of the gold, he would be very unlike his father, (or his uncle for that matter,) had he forgotten to enlarge on that subject, however brief upon others."

" Probably," said Ellinor, " the Corporal carried the main sum about him in those well-stuffed saddle-bags, and it was only the purse that Walter had about his person that was stolen ; and it is probable that the Corporal might have escaped, as he mentions nothing about that excellent personage."

" A shrewd guess, Nell : but pray, why should Walter carry the purse about him so carefully ? Ah, you blush : well, will you knit him another ?"

" Pshaw, Papa ! Good b'ye, I am going to gather you a nosegay."

But Ellinor was seized with a sudden fit of industry, and somehow or other she grew fonder of knitting than ever.

The neighbourhood was now tranquil and at peace ; the nightly predators that had infested the green valleys of Grassdale were heard of no more ; it seemed a sudden incursion of fraud and crime, which was too unnatural to the character of the spot invaded to do more than to terrify and to disappear. The *truditur dies die* ; the serene steps of one calm day chasing another returned, and the past alarm was only remembered as a tempting subject of gossip to the villagers, and (at the Hall) a theme of eulogium on the courage of Eugene Aram.

"It is a lovely day," said Lester to his daughters, as they sate at the window ; "come, girls, get your bonnets, and let us take a walk into the village."

"And meet the postman," said Ellinor, archly.
"Yes," rejoined Madeline in the same vein, but in a whisper that Lester might not hear, "for who knows but that we may have a letter from Walter?"

How prettily sounds such raillery on virgin

lips. No, no; nothing on earth is so lovely as the confidence between two happy sisters, who have no secrets but those of a guileless love to reveal !

As they strolled into the village, they were met by Peter Dealtry, who was slowly riding home on a large ass which carried himself and his panniers to the neighbouring market in a more quiet and luxurious indolence of action than would the harsher motions of the equine species.

"A fine day, Peter : and what news at market ?" said Lester.

"Corn high,—hay dear, your honour," replied the clerk.

"Ah, I suppose so ; a good time to sell ours, Peter ;—we must see about it on Saturday. But, pray, have you heard any thing from the Corporal since his departure ?"

"Not I, your honour, not I ; though I think as he might have given us a line, if it was only to thank me for my care of his cat, but—

' Them as comes to go to roam,
Thinks slight of they as stays at home.' "

“A notable distich, Peter; your own composition, I warrant.”

“Mine! Lord love your honour, I has no genus, but I has memory; and when them ere beautiful lines of poetry-like comes into my head, they stays there, and stays till they pops out at my tongue like a bottle of ginger-beer. I do loves poetry, Sir, ‘specially the sacred.”

“We know it,—we know it.”

“For there be summutter in it,” continued the clerk, “which smooths a man’s heart like a clothes-brush, wipes away the dust and dirt, and sets all the nap right; and I thinks as how ‘tis what a clerk of the parish ought to study, your honour.”

“Nothing better; you speak like an oracle.”

“Now, Sir, there be the Corporal, honest man, what thinks himself mighty clever,—but he has no soul for varse. Lord love ye, to see the faces he makes when I tells him a hymn or so; ‘tis quite wicked, your honour,—for that’s what the heathen did, as you well know, Sir.”

And when I does discourse of things
Most holy, to their tribe ;
What does they do ?—they mocks at me,
And makes my harp a gibe.

'Tis not what *I* calls pretty, Miss Ellinor."

" Certainly not, Peter ; I wonder, with your talents for verse, you never indulge in a little satire against such perverse taste."

" Satire ! what 's that ? Oh, I knows ; what they writes in elections. Why, Miss, mayhap—" here Peter paused, and winked significantly—" but the Corporal 's a passionate man, you knows : but I could so sting him—Aha ! we 'll see, we 'll see.—Do you know, your honour," here Peter altered his air to one of serious importance, as if about to impart a most sagacious conjecture, " I thinks there be one reason why the Corporal has not written to me."

" And what 's that, Peter ?"

" Cause, your honour, he 's ashamed of his writing : I fancy as how his spelling is no better than it should be—but mum 's the word. You sees, your honour, the Corporal 's got a tarn for

conversation-like— he be a mighty fine talker surely ! but he be shy of the pen—'tis not every man what talks biggest what 's the best schollard at bottom. Why, there 's the newspaper I saw in the market, (for I always sees the newspaper once a week,) says as how some of them great speakers in the Parliament House, are no better than ninnies when they gets upon paper ; and that 's the Corporal's case, I suspect : I suppose as how they can't spell all them ere long words they make use on. For my part, I thinks there be mortal desate (deceit) like in that ere public speaking ; for I knows how far a loud voice and a bold face goes, even in buying a cow, your honour ; and I 'm afraid the country 's greatly bubbled in that ere partiklar ; for if a man can't write down clearly what he means for to say, I does not thinks as how he knows what he means when he goes for to speak !"

This speech — quite a moral exposition from Peter, and, doubtless, inspired by his visit to market—for what wisdom cannot come from inter-

course?—our good publican delivered with especial solemnity, giving a huge thump on the sides of his ass as he concluded.

“Upon my word, Peter,” said Lester, laughing, “you have grown quite a Solomon; and, instead of a clerk, you ought to be a Justice of Peace, at the least: and, indeed, I must say that I think you shine more in the capacity of a lecturer than in that of a soldier.”

“Tis not for a clerk of the parish to have too great a knack at the weapons of the flesh,” said Peter, sanctimoniously, and turning aside to conceal a slight confusion at the unlucky reminiscence of his warlike exploits; “But lauk, Sir, even as to that, why we has frightened all the robbers away. What would you have us do more?”

“Upon my word, Peter, you say right; and now, good day. Your wife’s well, I hope? and Jacobina—is not that the cat’s name?—in high health and favour.”

“Hem, hem!—why, to be sure, the cat’s a good

cat ; but she steals Goody Truman's cream as she sets for butter reg'larly every night."

" Oh ! you must cure her of that," said Lester, smiling, " I hope that 's the worst fault."

" Why, your gardiner do say," replied Peter, reluctantly, " as how she goes arter the pheasants in Copse-hole."

" The deuce !" cried the Squire ; " that will never do : she must be shot, Peter, she must be shot. *My* pheasants ! *my* best preserves ! and poor Goody Truman's cream, too ! a perfect devil. Look to it, Peter ; if I hear any complaints again, Jacobina is done for—What are you laughing at, Nell ?"

" Well, go thy ways, Peter, for a shrewd man and a clever man ; it is not every one who could so suddenly have elicited my father's compassion for Goody Truman's cream."

" Pooh !" said the Squire, " a pheasant 's a serious thing, child ; but you women don't understand matters."

They had now crossed through the village into the fields, and were slowly sauntering by

" Hedge-row elms on hillocks green,"

when, seated under a stunted pollard, they came suddenly on the ill-favoured person of Dame Darkmans : she sat bent (with her elbows on her knees, and her hands supporting her chin,) looking up to the clear autumnal sky ; and as they approached, she did not stir, or testify by sign or glance that she even perceived them.

There is a certain kind-hearted sociality of temper that you see sometimes among country gentlemen, especially not of the highest rank, who knowing, and looked up to by, every one immediately around them, acquire the habit of accosting all they meet—a habit as painful for them to break, as it was painful for poor Rousseau to be asked ‘how he did’ by an applewoman. And the kind old Squire could not pass even Goody Darkmans, (coming thus abruptly upon her,) without a salutation.

“ All alone, Dame, enjoying the fine weather—that’s right—And how fares it with you ?”

The old woman turned round her dark and bleared eyes, but without moving limb or posture.

“ ‘Tis well-nigh winter now : ‘tis not easy for poor folks to fare well at this time o’ year. Where be we to get the firewood, and the clothing, and the dry bread, carse it ! and the drop o’ stuff that’s to keep out the cold. Ah, it’s fine for you to ask how we does, and the days shortening, and the air sharpening.”

“ Well, Dame, shall I send to —— for a warm cloak for you ?” said Madeline.

“ Ho ! thankye, young leddy—thankye kindly, and I’ll wear it at your widdng, for they says you be going to git married to the larned man yander. Wish ye well, ma’am, wish ye well.”

And the old hag grinned as she uttered this benediction, that sounded on her lips like the Lord’s Prayer on a witch’s ; which converts the devotion to a crime, and the prayer to a curse.

“ Ye’re very winsome, young lady,” she continued, eyeing Madeline’s tall and rounded figure from head to foot. “ Yes, very—but I was as bonny as you once, and if you lives—mind that—

fair and happy as you stand now, you'll be as withered, and foul-faced, and wretched as me—ha ! ha ! I loves to look on young folk, and think o' that. But mayhap ye won't live to be old—more's the pity, for ye might be a widow and childless, and a lone 'oman, as I be ; if you were to see sixty : an' wouldn't that be nice ?—ha ! ha !—much pleasure ye'd have in the fine weather then, and in people's fine speeches, eh ?”

“ Come, Dame,” said Lester, with a cloud on his benign brow, “ this talk is ungrateful to me, and disrespectful to Miss Lester ; it is not the way to —”

“ Hout !” interrupted the old woman ; “ I begs pardon, Sir, if I offended—I begs pardon, young lady, 'tis my way, poor old soul that I be. And you meant me kindly, and I would not be uncivil, now you are a-going to give me a bonny cloak,—and what colour shall it be ?”

“ Why, what colour would you like best, Dame—red ?”

“ Red !—no !—like a gypsy-quean, indeed ! Be-

sides, they all has red cloaks in the village, yonder. No ; a handsome dark grey—or a gay, cheersome black, an' then I'll dance in mourning at your wedding, young lady ; and that's what ye'll like. But what ha' ye done with the merry bridegroom, Ma'am ? Gone away, I hear. Ah, ye'll have a happy life on it, with a gentleman like him. I never seed him laugh once. Why does not ye hire me as your servant—would not I be a favourite thin ! I'd stand on the thrishold, and give ye good Morrow every day. Oh ! it does me a deal of good to say a blessing to them as be younger and gayer than me. Madge Darkman's blessing !—Och ! what a thing to wish for !”

“ Well, good day, mother,” said Lester, moving on.

“ Stay a bit, stay a bit, Sir ;—has ye any commands, Miss, yonder, at Master Aram's ? His old 'oman's a gossip of mine—we were young togither—and the lads did not know which to like the best. So we often meets, and talks of

the old times. I be going up there now.—Och ! I hope I shall be asked to the widding. And what a nice month to wid in ; Novimber—Novimber, that's the merry month for me ! But 'tis cold—bitter cold, too. Well, good day—good day. Ay," continued the hag, as Lester and the sisters moved on, " ye all goes and throws niver a look behind. Ye despises the poor in your hearts. But the poor will have their day. Och ! an' I wish ye were dead—dead—dead, an' I dancing in my bonny black cloak about your graves ; — for an't all *mine* dead—cold—cold—rotting, and one kind and rich man might ha' saved them all."

Thus mumbling, the wretched creature looked after the father and his daughters, as they wound onward, till her dim eyes caught them no longer ; and then, drawing her rags round her, she rose, and struck into the opposite path that led to Aram's house.

" I hope that hag will be no constant visitor at your future residence, Madeline," said the

younger sister ; " it would be like a blight on the air."

" And if we could remove her from the parish," said Lester, " it would be a happy day for the village. Yet, strange as it may seem, so great is her power over them all, that there is never a marriage, nor a christening in the village, from which she is absent—they dread her spite and foul tongue enough, to make them even ask humbly for her presence."

" And the hag seems to know that her bad qualities are a good policy, and obtain more respect than amiability would do," said Ellinor. " I think there is some design in all she utters."

" I don't know how it is, but the words and sight of that woman have struck a damp into my heart," said Madeline, musingly.

" It would be wonderful if they had not, child," said Lester, soothingly ; and he changed the conversation to other topics.

As concluding their walk, they re-entered the village, they encountered that most welcome of all

visitants to a country village, the postman—a tall, thin pedestrian, famous for swiftness of foot, with a cheerful face, a swinging gait, and Lester's bag slung over his shoulder. Our little party quickened their pace—one letter—for Madeline Aram's handwriting. Happy blush—bright smile! Ah! no meeting ever gives the delight that a letter can inspire in the short absences of a first love

“And none for me,” said Lester, in a disappointed tone, and Ellinor's hand hung more heavily on his arm, and her step moved slower. “It is very strange in Walter; but I am more angry than alarmed.”

“Be sure,” said Ellinor, after a pause, “that it is not his fault. Something may have happened to him. Good Heavens! if he has been attacked again—those fearful highwaymen!”

“Nay,” said Lester, “the most probable supposition after all is, that he will not write until his expectations are realized or destroyed. Natural enough, too; it is what I should have done, if I had been in his place.”

"Natural," said Ellinor, who now attacked where she before defended—"Natural not to give us *one* line, to say he is well and safe—natural; *I* could not have been so remiss!"

"Ay, child, you women are so fond of writing,—'tis not so with *us*, especially when we are moving about: it is always—'Well, I must write to-morrow—well, I must write when this is settled—well, I must write when I arrive at such a place;—and, meanwhile, time slips on, till perhaps we get ashamed of writing at all. I heard a great man say once, that 'Men must have something effeminate about them to be good correspondents; ' and 'faith, I think it's true enough on the whole."

"I wonder if Madeline thinks so?" said Ellinor, enviously glancing at her sister's absorption, as, lingering a little behind, she devoured the contents of her letter.

"He is coming home immediately, dear father; perhaps he may be here to-morrow," cried Madeline abruptly; "think of that, Ellinor! Ah! and

he writes in spirits!"—and the poor girl clapped her hands delightedly, as the colour danced joyously over her cheek and neck.

"I am glad to hear it," quoth Lester; "we shall have him at last beat even Ellinor in gaiety!"

"That may easily be," sighed Ellinor to herself, as she glided past them into the house, and sought her own chamber.

CHAPTER V.

A REFLECTION NEW AND STRANGE.—THE STREETS OF LONDON.—A GREAT MAN'S LIBRARY.—A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND AN ACQUAINTANCE OF THE READER'S.—ITS RESULT.

“Here's a statesman !

* * * *

Rollo. Ask for thyself.

Lat. What more can concern me than this?"

The Tragedy of Rollo.

IT was an evening in the declining autumn of 1758; some public ceremony had occurred during the day, and the crowd, which it had assembled was only now gradually lessening, as the shadows darkened along the streets. Through this crowd, self-absorbed as usual—with them—not one of them—Eugene Aram slowly wound his unaccompanied way. What an incalculable field of dread and

sombre contemplation is opened to every man who, with his heart disengaged from himself, and his eyes accustomed to the sharp observance of his tribe, walks through the streets of a great city ! What a world of dark and troublous secrets in the breast of every one who hurries by you ! Goëthe has said somewhere, that each of us, the best as the worst, hides within him something —some feeling, some remembrance that, if known, would make you hate him. No doubt the saying is exaggerated ; but still, what a gloomy and profound sublimity in the idea !—what a new insight it gives into the hearts of the common herd !—with what a strange interest it may inspire us for the humblest, the tritest passenger that shoulders us in the great thoroughfare of life ! One of the greatest pleasures in the world is to walk alone, and at night, (while they are yet crowded,) through the long lamplit streets of this huge metropolis. There, even more than in the silence of woods and fields, seems to me the source of endless, various meditation.

Μαρικὶ μὲν, τὸ τοῦ χρόνουτος θύμα

Πρᾶγμα καὶ ἀσχελεῖς ἴστητος

Θυμῷ.

Pin. Ist. I. 1.

There was that in Aram's person which irresistibly commanded attention. The earnest composure of his countenance, its thoughtful pallor, the long hair falling back, the peculiar and estranged air of his whole figure, accompanied as it was, by a mildness of expression, and that lofty abstraction which characterises one who is a brooder over his own heart—a ponderer and a soothsayer to his own dreams;—all these arrested from time to time the second gaze of the passenger, and forced on him the impression, simple as was the dress, and unpretending as was the gait of the stranger, that in indulging that second gaze, he was in all probability satisfying the curiosity which makes us love to fix our regard upon any remarkable man.

At length Aram turned from the more crowded

streets, and in a short time paused before one of the most princely houses in London. It was surrounded by a spacious court-yard, and over the porch, the arms of the owner, with the coronet and supporters, were raised in stone.

“Is Lord * * * * * within?” asked Aram of the bluff porter who appeared at the gate.

“My Lord is at dinner,” replied the porter, thinking the answer quite sufficient, and about to reclose the gate upon the unseasonable visitor.

“I am glad to find he is at home,” rejoined Aram, gliding past the servant, with an air of quiet and unconscious command, and passing the court-yard to the main building.

At the door of the house, to which you ascended by a flight of stone steps, the valet of the nobleman—the only nobleman introduced in our tale, and consequently the same whom we have presented to our reader in the earlier part of this work, happened to be lounging and enjoying the smoke of the evening air. High-bred, prudent,

and sagacious, Lord * * * * * knew well how often great men, especially in public life, obtain odium for the rudeness of their domestics, and all those, especially about himself, had been consequently tutored into the habits of universal courtesy and deference, to the lowest stranger, as well as to the highest guest. And trifling as this may seem, it was an act of morality as well as of prudence. Few can guess what pain may be saved to poor and proud men of merit by a similar precaution. The valet, therefore, replied to Aram's inquiry with great politeness; he recollect ed the name and repute of Aram, and as the Earl, taking delight in the company of men of letters, was generally easy of access to all such—the great man's great man instantly conducted the Student to the Earl's library, and informing him that his Lordship had not yet left the dining-room, where he was entertaining a large party, assured him that he should be informed of Aram's visit the moment he did so.

Lord * * * * was still in office: sundry boxes were scattered on the floor; papers, that seemed countless, lay strewed over the immense library-table; but here and there were books of a more seductive character than those of business; in which the mark lately set, and the pencilled note still fresh, showed the fondness with which men of cultivated minds, though engaged in official pursuits, will turn, in the momentary intervals of more arid and toilsome life, to those lighter studies which perhaps they in reality the most enjoy.

One of these books, a volume of Shaftesbury, Aram carefully took up; it opened of its own accord in that most beautiful and profound passage which contains perhaps the justest sarcasm, to which that ingenious and graceful reasoner has given vent.

“The very spirit of Faction, for the greatest part, seems to be no other than the abuse or irregularity of that social love and common affection which is natural to mankind—for the opposite of

sociableness, is selfishness, and of all characters, the thorough selfish one—is the least forward in taking party. The men of this sort are, in this respect, true men of moderation. They are secure of their temper, and possess themselves too well to be in danger of entering warmly into any cause, or engaging deeply with any side or faction."

On the margin of the page was the following note, in the handwriting of Lord * * * * *.

" Generosity hurries a man into party—philosophy keeps him aloof from it ; the Emperor Julian says in his epistle to Themistius, ' If you should form only three or four philosophers, you would contribute more essentially to the happiness of mankind than many kings united.' Yet, if all men were philosophers, I doubt whether, though more men would be virtuous, there would be so many instances of an extraordinary virtue. The violent passions produce dazzling irregularities."

The Student was still engaged with this note

when the Earl entered the room. As the door through which he passed was behind Aram, and he trod with a soft step, he was not perceived by the Scholar till he had reached him, and, looking over Aram's shoulder, the Earl said :—“ You will dispute the truth of my remark, will you not? Profound calm is the element in which you would place all the virtues.”

“ Not *all*, my Lord,” answered Aram, rising, as the Earl now shook him by the hand, and expressed his delight at seeing the Student again. Though the sagacious nobleman had no sooner heard the Student's name, than, in his own heart, he was convinced that Aram had sought him for the purpose of soliciting a renewal of the offers he had formerly refused; he resolved to leave his visitor to open the subject himself, and appeared courteously to consider the visit as a matter of course, made without any other object than the renewal of the mutual pleasure of intercourse.

"I am afraid, my Lord," said Aram, "that you are engaged. My visit can be paid to-morrow if—"

"Indeed," said the Earl interrupting him, and drawing a chair to the table, "I have no engagements which should deprive me of the pleasure of your company. A few friends have indeed dined with me, but as they are now with Lady * * * * *, I do not think they will greatly miss me; besides, an occasional absence is readily forgiven in us happy men of office—we, who have the honour of exciting the envy of all England, for being made magnificently wretched."

"I am glad you allow so much, my Lord," said Aram smiling, "*I could not have said more. Ambition only makes a favourite to make an ingrate;—she has lavished her honours on Lord * * * * *, and see how he speaks of her bounty?*"

"Nay," said the Earl, "I spoke wantonly, and stand corrected. I have no reason to complain of the course I have chosen. Ambition, like any other passion, gives us unhappy

moments ; but it gives us also an animated life. In its pursuit, the minor evils of the world are not felt ; little crosses, little vexations do not disturb us. Like men who walk in sleep, we are absorbed in one powerful dream, and do not even know the obstacles in our way, or the dangers that surround us : in a word, we have *no private life*. All that is merely domestic, the anxiety and the loss which fret other men, which blight the happiness of other men, are not felt by us : we are wholly public ;—so that if we lose much comfort, we escape much care.”

The Earl broke off for a moment ; and then turning the subject, inquired after the Lesters, and making some general and vague observations about that family, came purposely to a pause.

Aram broke it :—

“ My Lord,” said he, with a slight, but not ungraceful, embarrassment, “ I fear that, in the course of your political life, you must have made one observation, that he who promises to-day, will be called upon to perform to-morrow. No

man who has any thing to bestow, can ever promise with impunity. Some time since, you tendered me offers that would have dazzled more ardent natures than mine; and which I might have advanced some claim to philosophy in refusing. I do not now come to ask a renewal of those offers. Public life, and the haunts of men, are as hateful as ever to my pursuits: but I come, frankly and candidly, to throw myself on that generosity, which proffered to me then so large a bounty. Certain circumstances have taken from me the small pittance which supplied my wants;—I require only the power to pursue my quiet and obscure career of study—your Lordship can afford me that power: it is not against custom for the Government to grant some small annuity to men of letters—your Lordship's interest could obtain for me this favour. Let me add, however, that I can offer nothing in return! Party politics—Sectarian interests—are for ever dead to me: even my common studies are of small general utility to mankind—I am con-

scious of this—would it were otherwise!—Once I hoped it would be—but—” Aram here turned deadly pale, gasped for breath, mastered his emotion, and proceeded—“ I have no great claim, then, to this bounty, beyond that which all poor cultivators of the abstruse sciences can advance. It is well for a country that those sciences should be cultivated; they are not of a nature which is ever lucrative to the possessor—not of a nature that can often be left, like lighter literature, to the fair favour of the public—they call, perhaps, more than any species of intellectual culture, for the protection of a government; and though in me would be a poor selection, the principle would still be served, and the example furnish precedent for nobler instances hereafter. I have said all, my Lord !”

Nothing, perhaps, more affects a man of some sympathy with those who cultivate letters, than the pecuniary claims of one who can advance them with justice, and who advances them also with dignity. If the meanest, the most pitiable,

the most heart-sickening object in the world, is the man of letters, sunk into the habitual beggar, practising the tricks, incurring the rebuke, glorying in the shame, of the mingled mendicant and swindler ;—what, on the other hand, so touches, so subdues us, as the first, and only petition, of one whose intellect dignifies our whole kind ; and who prefers it with a certain haughtiness in his very modesty ; because, in asking a favour to himself, he may be only asking the power to enlighten the world ?

“ Say no more, Sir,” said the Earl, affected deeply, and giving gracefully way to the feeling ; “ the affair is settled. Consider it utterly so. Name only the amount of the annuity you desire.”

With some hesitation Aram named a sum so moderate, so trivial, that the Minister, accustomed as he was to the claims of younger sons and widowed dowagers—accustomed to the hungry cravings of petitioners without merit, who considered birth the only just title to the right of exactions from the public—was literally startled by the contrast.

"More than this," added Aram, "I do not require, and would decline to accept. We have some right to claim existence from the administrators of the common stock—none to claim affluence."

"Would to Heaven!" said the Earl, smiling, "that all claimants were like you: pension lists would not then call for indignation; and ministers would not blush to support the justice of the favours they conferred. But are you still firm in rejecting a more public career, with all its deserved emoluments and just honours? The offer I made you once, I renew with increased avidity now."

"*'Despiciam dites,'*" answered Aram, "and, thanks to you, I may add, '*despiciamque famem.*'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE THAMES AT NIGHT.—A THOUGHT.—THE STUDENT RE-SEEKS THE RUFFIAN.—A HUMAN FEELING EVEN IN THE WORST SOIL.

Clem. 'Tis our last interview !

Stat. Pray Heav'n it be.

CLEMANTHES.

ON leaving Lord * * * * *, 'Aram proceeded, with a lighter and more rapid step, towards a less courtly quarter of the metropolis.

He had found, on arriving in London, that in order to secure the annual sum promised to Houseman, it had been necessary to strip himself even of the small stipend he had hoped to retain. And hence his visit, and hence his petition to Lord * * * *. He now bent his way to the spot in which Houseman had appointed their meeting. To the fastidious reader these details of pecuniary mat-

ters, so trivial in themselves, may be a little wearisome, and may seem a little undignified ; but we are writing a romance of real life, and the reader must take what is homely with what may be more epic—the pettiness and the wants of the daily world, with its loftier sorrows and its grander crimes. Besides, who knows how darkly just may be that moral which shows us a nature originally high, a soul once all a-thirst for truth, bowed (by what events ?) to the manœuvres and the lies of the worldly hypocrite ?

The night had now closed in, and its darkness was only relieved by the wan lamps that vista'd the streets, and a few dim stars that struggled through the reeking haze that curtained the great city. Aram had now gained one of the bridges ‘that arch the royal Thames,’ and, in no time dead to scenic attraction, he there paused for a moment, and looked along the dark river that rushed below.

Oh, God ! how many wild and stormy hearts have stilled themselves on that spot, for one

dread instant of thought—of calculation—of resolve—one instant the last of life ! Look at night along the course of that stately river, how gloriously it seems to mock the passions of them that dwell beside it ;—Unchanged—unchanging—all around it quick death, and troubled life ; itself smiling up to the grey stars, and singing from its deep heart as it bounds along. Beside it is the Senate, proud of its solemn triflers, and there the cloistered Tomb, in which as the loftiest honour, some handful of the fiercest of the strugglers may gain forgetfulness and a grave ! There is no moral to a great city like the River that washes its walls.

There was something in the view before him, that suggested reflections similar to these, to the strange and mysterious breast of the lingering Student. A solemn dejection crept over him, a warning voice sounded on his ear, the fearful Genius within him was aroused, and even in the moment when his triumph seemed complete and his safety secured, he felt it only as

“ The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.”

The mist obscured and saddened the few lights scattered on either side the water. And a deep and gloomy quiet brooded round;

“ The very houses seemed asleep,
And all that mighty heart was lying still.”

Arousing himself from his short and sombre reverie, Aram resumed his way, and threading some of the smaller streets on the opposite side of the water, arrived at last in the street in which he was to seek Houseman.

It was a narrow and dark lane, and seemed altogether of a suspicious and disreputable locality. One or two samples of the lowest description of alehouses broke the dark silence of the spot ;—from them streamed the only lights which assisted the single lamp that burned at the entrance of the alley ; and bursts of drunken laughter and obscene merriment broke out every now and then from these wretched theatres of *Pleasure*. As Aram passed one of them, a crowd of the lowest order of ruffian and harlot issued noisily from the door, and suddenly obstructed his way ; through this vile press reeking with the stamp

and odour of the most repellent character of vice was the lofty and cold Student to force his path ! The darkness, his quick step, his downcast head, favoured his escape through the unhallowed throng, and he now stood opposite the door of a small and narrow house. A ponderous knocker adorned the door, which seemed of uncommon strength, being thickly studded with large nails. He knocked twice before his summons was answered, and then a voice from within, cried, “ Who’s there ? What want you ? ”

“ I seek one called Houseman.”

No answer was returned — some moments elapsed. Again the Student knocked, and presently he heard the voice of Houseman himself call out,

“ Who’s there—Joe the Cracksman ? ”

“ Richard Houseman, it is I,” answered Aram, in a deep tone, and suppressing the natural feelings of loathing and abhorrence.

Houseman uttered a quick exclamation ; the door was hastily unbarred All within was ut-

terly dark ; but Aram felt with a thrill of repugnance, the grip of his strange acquaintance on his hand.

" Ha ! it is you !—Come in, come in !—let me lead you. Have a care—cling to the wall—the right hand—now then—stay. So—so"—(opening the door of a room, in which a single candle, well-nigh in its socket, broke on the previous darkness;) " here we are ! here we are ! And, how goes it—eh !"

Houseman, now bustling about, did the honours of his apartment with a sort of complacent hospitality. He drew two rough wooden chairs, that in some late merriment seemed to have been upset, and lay, cumbering the unwashed and carpetless floor, in a position exactly contrary to that destined them by their maker ;—he drew these chairs near a table strewed with drinking horns, half-emptied bottles, and a pack of cards. Dingy caricatures of the large coarse fashion of the day, decorated the walls ; and carelessly thrown on another table, lay a pair of huge horse-pistols, an

immense shovel hat, a false moustache, a rouge-pot, and a riding-whip. All this the Student comprehended with a rapid glance—his lip quivered for a moment—whether with shame or scorn of himself, and then throwing himself on the chair Houseman had set for him, he said,

“ I have come to discharge my part of our agreement.”

“ You are most welcome,” replied Houseman, with that tone of coarse, yet flippant jocularity, which afforded to the mien and manner of Aram a still stronger contrast than his more unrelieved brutality.

“ There,” said Aram, giving him a paper : “ there you will perceive that the sum mentioned is secured to you, the moment you quit this country. When shall that be ? Let me entreat haste.”

“ Your prayer shall be granted. Before day-break to-morrow, I will be on the road.”

Aram’s face brightened.

“ There is my hand upon it,” said Houseman,

earnestly. " You may now rest assured that you are free of me for life. Go home—marry—enjoy your existence—as I have done. Within four days, if the wind set fair, I am in France."

" My business is done; I will believe you," said Aram, frankly, and rising.

" You may," answered Houseman. " Stay—I will light you to the door. Devil and death—how the d—d candle flickers."

Across the gloomy passage, as the candle now flared—and now was dulled—by quick fits and starts,—Houseman, after this brief conference, re-conducted the Student. And as Aram turned from the door, he flung his arms wildly aloft, and exclaimed in the voice of one, from whose heart a load is lifted—" Now, now, for Madeline. I breathe freely at last."

Meanwhile, Houseman turned musingly back, and regained his room, muttering,

" Yes — yes — *my* business here is also done ! Competence and safety abroad—after all, what a bugbear is this conscience !—fourteen years have

rolled away—and lo! nothing discovered! nothing known! And easy circumstances—the very consequence of the deed—wait the remainder of my days:—my child, too—my Jane—shall not want—shall not be a beggar nor a harlot."

So musing, Houseman threw himself contentedly on the chair, and the last flicker of the expiring light, as it played upward on his rugged countenance—rested on one of those self-hugging smiles, with which a sanguine man contemplates a satisfactory future.

He had not been long alone, before the door opened; and a woman with a light in her hand appeared. She was evidently intoxicated, and approached Houseman with a reeling and unsteady step.

"How now, Bess? drunk as usual. Get to bed, you she shark, go!"

"Tush, man, tush! don't talk to your betters," said the woman, sinking into a chair; and her situation, disgusting as it was, could not con-

ceal the rare, though somewhat coarse beauty of her face and person.

Even Houseman, (his heart being opened, as it were, by the cheering prospects of which his soliloquy had indulged the contemplation,) was sensible of the effect of the mere physical attraction, and drawing his chair closer to her, he said in a tone less harsh than usual.

"Come, Bess, come, you must correct that d—d habit of yours; perhaps I may make a lady of you after all. What if I were to let you take a trip with me to France, old girl, eh? and let you set off that handsome face, for you are devilish handsome, and that's the truth of it, with some of the French gewgaws you women love. What if I were? would you be a good girl, eh?"

"I think I would, Dick,—I think I would," replied the woman, showing a set of teeth as white as ivory, with pleasure partly at the flattery, partly at the proposition: "you are a good fellow, Dick, that you are."

“Humph!” said Houseman, whose hard, shrewd mind was not easily cajoled, “but what’s that paper in your bosom, Bess? a love-letter, I’ll swear.”

“ ‘Tis to you then; came to you this morning, only somehow or other, I forgot to give it you till now!”

“Ha! a letter to me?” said Houseman, seizing the epistle in question. “Hem! the Knaresbro’ postmark—my mother-in-law’s crabbed hand, too! what can the old crone want?”

He opened the letter, and hastily scanning its contents, started up.

“Mercy, mercy!” cried he, “my child is ill, dying. I may never see her again,—my only child,—the only thing that loves me,—that does not loath me as a villain!”

“Heyday, Dicky!” said the woman, clinging to him, “don’t take on so, who so fond of you as me?—what’s a brat like that?”

“Curse on you, hag!” exclaimed Houseman, dashing her to the ground with a rude brutality,



you love me ! Pah ! My child,—my little Jane,
—my pretty Jane,—my merry Jane,—my innocent
Jane—I will seek her instantly—instantly ; what 's
money ? what ' s ease,—if—if—”

And the father, wretch, ruffian as he was,
stung to the core of that last redeeming feeling of
his dissolute nature, struck his breast with his
clenched hand, and rushed from the room—from
the house.

CHAPTER VI.

MADELINE, HER HOPES.—A MILD AUTUMN CHARACTERISED.
—A LANDSCAPE.—A RETURN.

“ Tis late, and cold—stir up the fire,
Sit close, and draw the table nigher ;
Be merry and drink wine that’s old,
A hearty medicine ‘gainst a cold,
Welcome—welcome shall fly round !”

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER. — *Song in the
Lover’s Progress.*

As when the Great Poet,

“ Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detained
In that obscure sojourn ; while, in his flight
Through utter and through middle darkness borne,
He sang of chaos, and eternal night :—

As when, revisiting the “ Holy Light, offspring of
heaven first-born,” the sense of freshness and glory
breaks upon him, and kindles into the solemn
joyfulness of adjuring song : so rises the mind

from the contemplation of the gloom and guilt of life, "the utter and the middle darkness," to some pure and bright redemption of our nature—some creature of "the starry threshold," "the regions mild of calm and serene air." Never was a nature more beautiful and soft than that of Madeline Lester—never a nature more inclined to live "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot, which men call earth"—to commune with its own high and chaste creations of thought—to make a world out of the emotions which *this* world knows not—a paradise, which sin, and suspicion, and fear, had never yet invaded—where God might recognise no evil, and Angels forebode no change.

Aram's return was now daily, nay, even hourly expected. Nothing disturbed the soft, though thoughtful serenity, with which his betrothed relied upon the future. Aram's letters had been more deeply impressed with the evidence of love, than even his spoken vows: those letters had diffused not so much an agitated joy, as a full

and mellow light of happiness over her heart. Every thing, even Nature, seemed inclined to smile with approbation on her hopes. The autumn had never, in the memory of man, worn so lovely a garment: the balmy and freshening warmth, which sometimes characterises that period of the year, was not broken, as yet, by the chilling winds, or the sullen mists, which speak to us so mournfully of the change that is creeping over the beautiful world. The summer visitants among the feathered tribe yet lingered in flocks, showing no intention of departure; and their song—but above all, the song of the sky-lark—which, to the old English poet, was what the nightingale is to the Eastern—seemed even to grow more cheerful as the sun shortened his daily task;—the very mulberry-tree, and the rich boughs of the horse chesnut, retained something of their verdure; and the thousand glories of the woodland around Grassdale were still chequered with the golden hues that herald, but beautify Decay. Still, no news had been received of Walter: and this was

the only source of anxiety that troubled the domestic happiness of the Manor-house. But the Squire continued to remember, that in youth he himself had been but a negligent correspondent; and the anxiety he felt, assumed rather the character of anger at Walter's forgetfulness, than of fear for his safety. There were moments when Ellinor silently mourned and pined; but she loved her sister not less even than her cousin; and in the prospect of Madeline's happiness, did not too often question the future respecting her own.

One evening, the sisters were sitting at their work by the window of the little parlour, and talking over various matters of which the Great World, strange as it may seem, never made a part.

They conversed in a low tone, for Lester sat by the hearth in which a wood fire had been just kindled, and appeared to have fallen into an afternoon slumber. The sun was sinking to repose, and the whole landscape lay before them bathed in light, till a cloud passing overhead, darkened

the heavens just immediately above them, and one of those beautiful sun showers, that rather characterize the spring than autumn, began to fall; the rain was rather sharp, and descended with a pleasant and freshening noise through the boughs, all shining in the sun light ; it did not, however, last long, and presently there sprang up the glorious rainbow, and the voices of the birds, which a minute before were mute, burst into a general chorus, the last hymn of the declining day. The sparkling drops fell fast and gratefully from the trees, and over the whole scene there breathed an inexpressible sense of gladness—

“ The odour and the harmony of eve.”

“ How beautiful !” said Ellinor, pausing from her work—“ Ah, see the squirrel, is that our pet one ? he is coming close to the window, poor fellow ! Stay, I will get him some bread.”

“ Hush !” said Madeline, half rising, and turning quite pale, “ Do you hear a step without ?”

“ Only the dripping of the boughs,” answered Ellinor.

"No—no—it is he—it is he!" cried Madeline, the blood rushing back vividly to her cheeks, "I know his step!"

And—yes—winding round the house till he stood opposite the window, the sisters now beheld Eugene Aram; the diamond rain glittered on the locks of his long hair; his cheeks were flushed by exercise, or more probably the joy of return; a smile, in which there was no shade or sadness, played over his features, which caught also a fictitious semblance of gladness from the rays of the setting sun which fell full upon them.

"My Madeline, my love, my Madeline!" broke from his lips.

"You are returned—thank God—thank God—safe—well?"

"And happy!" added Aram, with a deep meaning in the tone of his voice.

"Hey day, hey day!" cried the Squire, starting up, "what's this? bless me, Eugene!—wet through too, seemingly! Nell, run and open the door—more wood on the fire—the pheasants for

supper—and stay, girl, stay—there's the key of the cellar—the twenty-one port—you know it. Ah! ah! God willing, Eugene Aram shall not complain of his welcome back to Grassdale!"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



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